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EUROPE

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Mandelson, the minister and the secret £373,000 loan



Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, left, who lent £373,000 to his colleague Peter Mandelson, the Trade Secretary, to buy his £475,000 home in Notting Hill, London

Blair and Whitehall not told about deal for two years

David Hencke, Ewen Macaskill and Seumas Milne

CABINET minister Peter Mandelson is involved in a secret financial arrangement with his beleaguered government colleague Geoffrey Robinson concerning a loan of £373,000 to buy his London home, a Guardian investigation can disclose.

The extraordinary deal was not disclosed for more than two years to Tony Blair, despite the crucial political relationship and close personal friendship between Mr Mandelson and the Prime Minister. Key Whitehall officials were also kept in the dark until a few days ago.

Mr Mandelson and Mr Robinson issued statements to the Guardian last night confirming the loan. Its disclosure will intensify pressure on Mr Robinson, the Paymaster General, who has been at the centre of a string of revelations about his tax and business affairs.

Mr Mandelson insisted that there was nothing wrong with the loan. He said: "At all times I have protected the integrity and professionalism of the DTI. Geoffrey Robinson asked for confidentiality and I respected that. I do not believe that accepting a loan from a friend and fellow member of parliament was wrong. There is no conflict of interest in this. The loan was

always intended to be a short-term arrangement and I am in the process of repaying the remainder of the loan in full with the help of my mother."

Mr Robinson said: "Peter Mandelson, a friend of long standing, asked me for help in 1996. I was in a position to help through a loan and did so with the understanding that it would be repaid in full in due course. That is all there was and there is to it."

Mr Mandelson paid back £40,624 in spring 1997, and is in the process of paying back the rest. The loan was given at Midland Bank base rate, which is substantially lower than the market mortgage rate. He would not have been able to borrow the same sum from an ordinary lender and has so far saved at least £10,000 in interest payments.

Mr Mandelson has left himself vulnerable by failing to tell the Prime Minister or the permanent secretary of the loan until last week. He faces accusations of at least two possible areas of conflict of interest. The first involves allegations in September that Mr Robinson's businesses breached company law, a matter that would result in investigation by the DTI and mean one minister sitting in judgment on another. However, Mr Mandelson attempted to put himself in the clear by telling the permanent secretary at the time that he would rule himself out of any investigation. Nevertheless he did not disclose the loan to the permanent secretary because, he told the Guardian last night, "I was satisfied that any conflict of interest had been properly dealt with."

The second area of potential conflict involves a DTI independent inspectors' report into the Maxwell empire, to which Mr Robinson was Turn to page 2, column 7

Peters' friends, pages 2 and 3

Lockerbie trial setback

Ian Black and Mark Tran in New York

HOPES for a handover of the Lockerbie bombing suspects suffered a fresh blow last night when Colonel Muammar Gaddafi said he wanted an international court and not the Scottish trial being prepared in the Netherlands.

As relatives gathered in the United States, Lockerbie and Westminster, the 270 dead on the 10th anniversary of the downing of Pan Am 103, the Libyan leader appeared to be laying down new conditions. "An international court is the solution, with judges from America, Libya, England and other countries," Col Gaddafi said in the interview with NQ5 television, recorded a week ago.

Britain and the US last night threatened Libya with tougher sanctions unless it hands over the suspects, Abdel Baset al-Megrahi and Al-Amir Khalifah Fhimah, by February, when the UN Security Council reviews sanctions against Tripoli.

By then, the US said, Libya would have had six months to accept the Anglo-American offer of a trial in the Netherlands.

Speaking at a desert camp Col Gaddafi said he did not rule out reaching a compromise with Britain and the US. "The door must stay open. We're not saying no," he said. "We will do everything to reach a solution."

Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general, met Col Gaddafi on December 5 to press him to agree to a trial in the Netherlands before Scottish judges. But Col Gaddafi appeared to be contradicting a decision last week by the country's General People's Congress, ostensibly Libya's decision-making body, saying that it had accepted the US-British offer, and calling on them to overcome obstacles.

Clinton's poll rating soars

Martin Kettle and Julian Boyer in Washington

THE American public rallied behind Bill Clinton yesterday, as a series of post-impeachment opinion polls boosted the president's ratings to record levels, swelling calls for an early end to the US constitutional crisis.

Two days after the House of Representatives passed two articles of impeachment against Mr Clinton, the president's approval level with the voters leapt 10 points to a personal all-time high of 73 per cent in the latest Gallup poll.

Sixty-eight per cent told the same poll that the Senate should not convict Mr Clinton in the pending impeachment trial, while support for resignation fell to 30 per cent. Sixty-three per cent said they disapproved of the House impeachment vote and only 31 per cent had a favourable view of the Republican Party.

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Peter's friend and the secret loan

Purchase sparked wide speculation

Nick Hopkins

NOBODY doubts that the house befits the man. The Georgian terrace oozes elegance and the neighbourhood is sprinkled with the kind of political and media potentates he loves. Northumberland Place, on the fringes of Notting Hill, west London, is Mandelson

country all right. But the question that swirled around the bars at Westminster was: How on earth did Peter pay for it?

Non one was aware of the low-interest loan from his old friend Geoffrey Robinson who as fairy godfather enabled him to make the purchase.

Mr Mandelson bought the house in November 1996 after living in a bachelor-pad ground-floor flat in Wilmington Square, Clerkenwell, east

London. By any standards, it was a spectacular leap up the property ladder.

He was far too discreet to say what he paid for the four-storey home, but its former owner, Ann Lucas, gave the game away. She refers anyone who asks to a piece in the London Evening Standard's gossip column, Londoners' Diary, which claimed she had sold the house for £475,000. "They got it about right," she says.

The figure was still baffling. Two years ago Mr Mandelson was drawing an annual salary of £43,000 as MP for Hartlepool. Even now that his ministerial wage is £30,000 it was not apparent how he could have secured a mortgage.

Peter Mandelson's statement: "In October 1996, while in opposition, I was loaned £273,000 by Geoffrey Robinson to assist me in the purchase of my house in London. I have since repaid £40,624.68 and the loan now stands at £232,375.32."

"In addition to this loan, I obtained a mortgage from a building society in respect of the purchase."

"The loan was always intended to be a short-term arrangement and I am in the process of repaying the remainder of the loan in full with the help of my mother."

Mr Mandelson must have had a substantial deposit, and the sum that remained was paid for with a loan from the Britannia Building Society. So where had the bulk of

the cash come from? It seemed unlikely that it was his own.

Although Mr Mandelson was well-known during the 1980s as the man who helped to conceive New Labour, he was not highly paid — his salary as Neil Kinnock's director of campaigns and communications was £21,000. Before becoming an MP in

1992, he had been taken on by the political consultancy firm Prima, but even with his contacts, it seemed unlikely he could have earned and saved hundreds of thousands of

pounds in two years of service.

He may have had enough to pay for the £70,000 home he keeps in his constituency, but not enough to pay for a sought-after property in one of London's choicest neighbourhoods. Mr Mandelson's friends whispered that the money for the London house was probably a legacy. But that didn't ring true either.

His grandfather, Herbert Morrison, left less than £30,000 when he died in 1965, and his father George, who liked to be called Tony, left £51,711.58 when he passed away 10 years ago. His estate was passed to his wife, Mary. If the purchase perplexed some MPs in the House of

Commons, it was not for want of disclosure. There is no conflict of interest in this.

"In the case of the register of members' interests and the ministerial code, you have to identify a potential conflict of interest before the need to declare a financial interest arises."

"In this case, I removed myself from any such conflict of interest and insulated myself from any of Geoffrey Robinson's affairs, and thereby removed the need for any declaration."

Member of Parliament was wrong. There is no conflict of interest in this.

Robinson largesse aided key Labour players

DONOR: David Hencke on the renaissance of a generous MP who had disappeared from the political radar

THE official job title of Paymaster General is a particularly apt description for Geoffrey Robinson. For the man who signs cheques for £220 billion of public expenditure has also paid out two big cheques

one to Labour's key player, Peter Mandelson, and another to an influential think tank.

Mr Mandelson's lifestyle in fashionable Notting Hill has largely been made possible by a £273,000 low-interest loan from his old friend, the £10-millionaire, which enabled the Trade Secretary to buy his £475,000 house in 1996.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown's political power base was strengthened by Mr Robinson's payments to the Smith Political Economy Unit which financed his research on windfall tax before Labour's victory in the 1997 general election.

Since then the Chancellor has enjoyed the use of the Coventry North West MP's Park Lane penthouse in the Grosvenor House hotel for recuperation and political planning.

Tony Blair has also benefited from the self-made millionaire's largesse, twice taking his family for summer holidays in Mr Robinson's converted Tuscan monastery with its Italianate chapel, pool and tennis courts.

Mr Robinson's reappearance at the apex of New Labour has been remarkable. Originally marked out as a high-flyer when he won a crucial by-election in Coventry North West in 1976, he held a string of frontbench opposition posts in the 1980s. As an experienced businessman, he was a rarity among Labour MPs.

Then from 1986, he disappeared off the political radar and went off to make his millions. His business affairs in this period included dealings with Robert Maxwell. Over two years from 1986-1988 he asked just one question in the House of Commons. Labour whips had difficulty finding him for Commons votes.

In February 1996 he hit the

headlines as the saviour of the ailing New Statesman. By offering £275,000, Mr Robinson saved the left-wing journal from bankruptcy. The New Statesman got rid of its left-wing editor, Steve Platt, and replaced him with the more middle-of-the-road Ian Hargreaves, former editor of the Independent.

Mr Robinson used a £2 off-the-peg company, Stenbell, to finance the New Statesman and pay competitive salaries to attract Hargreaves and other Fleet Street commentators to the magazine.

Stenbell was also used to transfer £10 million of shares in Mr Robinson's company, TransTec, to a tax-free offshore family trust in Guernsey in which he has an interest as a discretionary beneficiary. This was never declared in the MPs' register of interests and Mr Robinson had to apologise for this fact to the Commons last month.

At the same time Mr Robinson was also a secret donor to the Smith Political Economy Unit, a think tank set up in 1996 and named after the late Labour leader John Smith. It advised Gordon Brown on how to implement the windfall tax on the utilities which financed Labour's New Deal programme in office. Ed Balls, Gordon Brown's special adviser, was a director of the company.

That summer, and the following year, Mr Robinson lent Tony Blair his Tuscan holiday home for a family holiday. In November of that year, a £273,000 loan from Mr Robinson helped his old friend Peter Mandelson, Blair's closest ally in Labour's election campaign, clinch a deal for a £475,000 house in Notting Hill.

Mr Robinson was appointed to the new Labour government in May 1997, with the job of Paymaster General and the task of selling the private finance initiative to business. His business experience clinched the job.

What was not known was how Mr Robinson's business past would come back to haunt him.



Geoffrey Robinson... after 1986 he went off to make his millions. His reappearance at the heart of New Labour has been remarkable

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK MARTIN

Robinson's rise

□ Born May 25, 1938. Son of furniture manufacturer, winning Coventry North West by-election in 1976. Result key to Labour government's survival in power.

□ In same year launches business venture Transfer Technology, turning inventions in universities (mainly Aston in Birmingham) into profit-making projects for car industry.

□ As Labour goes into opposition, given succession of frontbench jobs on industry and science by Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock between 1980 and 1986.

□ Quits frontbench politics

and joins up with Robert Maxwell in 1986. Eventually through a series of complicated deals emerges as a multi-millionaire owner of disgraced tycoon's engineering empire after Maxwell's death in 1991.

□ In late 1980s and early 1990s purchases his major real estate — two Lutwens mansions and villa in Tuscany. He is also left £12.5 million in an offshore trust by long-term friend Joska Bourgeois, a Belgian millionaire whom he first met in Italy in 1972.

□ Political career restarts in 1996 under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Lends Peter Mandelson £273,000 to buy his Notting Hill home, rescues New Statesman magazine; funds shadow chancellor Gordon Brown's office; and entertains the Blairs for two summer holidays on his Tuscan country estate.

□ Becomes Paymaster General in 1997. His troubles begin as questions are raised in Parliament about failures to declare previous business interests. Ordered to apologise to the House of Commons for breaking rules on registering paid directorships.

Code's strict rules for ministers

David Hencke and Ewen MacAskill

GEOFFREY Robinson and Peter Mandelson were just an MP and an Opposition civil service spokesman at the time of the £273,000 loan.

The two are now ministers. Mr Mandelson's department is adjudicating on whether some of Mr Robinson's businesses have committed breaches of company law, although Mr Mandelson has issued a statement saying that he has not been involved in the process and there is no conflict of interest.

The ministerial code — the Bible for minister's conduct — does not mention loans. But it is specific about the acceptance of gifts. "It is a well-established and recognised rule that no minister or public servant should accept gifts, hospitality or services from anyone, which would, or might appear to, place him or her under an obligation," it says.

It is not clear whether a low-interest loan is a gift under the code. Mr Mandelson argues in any case he was not covered by this clause as he was not a minister at the time, and the code is not retrospective. He also says: "You have to identify a potential conflict of interest before the need to declare a financial interest arises."

The code also says: "They [ministers] should also consult the permanent secretary in charge of their department, who is the minister's principal adviser and who also, as accounting officer, has a personal responsibility for financial propriety and regularity. "It is in the end for the ministers to judge (subject to the Prime Minister's decision in cases of doubt) what action they need to take; but they should record, in a minute to the permanent secretary, whether or not they consider any action necessary; the nature of any such action taken then or subsequently to

avoid actual or perceived conflict of interest."

Whether Mr Mandelson should have disclosed it in the register of MPs' interests is unclear. The register states MPs must declare "any gift or material advantage received by the Member or the Member's spouse from a UK source which in any way relates to membership of the House".

It also says that the register is "to provide information of any pecuniary interest or other material benefit which a Member receives which might reasonably be thought by others to influence his or her actions, speeches or votes in Parliament".

Mandelson's secret deal on new home

continued from page 1

linked. Mr Mandelson will have to decide whether to publish the report, which is not yet completed.

Mr Mandelson is also likely to face complaints over his decision not to disclose the loan in the register of members' interests.

He said last night he was under no obligation on either the ministerial code of conduct or the members' register. "In the case of the register of members' interests, you have to identify a potential conflict of interest before the need to declare a financial interest arises. In this case, I removed myself from any such conflict of interest and insulated myself from any of Geoffrey Robinson's affairs, and thereby removed the need for any declaration."

The disclosure is an embarrassment for Mr Robinson. Mr Mandelson and Mr Blair, who took two holidays in Mr Robinson's Tuscan villa, and the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, who stayed at his home in Cannes. Mr Robin-

son has been generous in support of his colleagues since just before the general election, and bailed out the Labour modernisers' magazine, the New Statesman.

Mr Mandelson, and Mr Brown have been engaged in a feud since 1994, one that now threatens to engulf not only Mr Robinson and Mr Mandelson but the Chancellor's press aide, Charlie Whelan, who has been blamed for anti-Mandelson leaks.

Mr Whelan helped Mirror journalist Paul Routledge with a biography of Mr Brown published in January and there have been suspicious around Westminster that he has again helped him with a hostile biography of Mr Mandelson to be published early next year.

Mr Mandelson's camp believe Routledge has, independently of the Guardian, discovered details of the loan.

Last night, Mr Whelan denied being behind the latest disclosures. He said: "I haven't a fucking clue what is in Paul Routledge's book. You had better ask him."

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that bought a £475,000 home

House remade as modernist shrine

continued from page 2

Commons, it certainly didn't seem to bother Mr Mandelson. For a start, he found himself surrounded by friends.

Sir Ian Wigglesworth, a member of the board at Frima and now chairman of the "cash for access" lobbyist firm GPC, and his wife Lady Patricia, live next door. His confidante Carla Powell, the wife of Sir Charles Powell, Baron

ess Thatcher's former private secretary, is close by for weekend coffee breaks. John Birt, director-general of the BBC and Mr Mandelson's boss when they both worked at LWT in the early 1980s, lives within walking distance, as does Michael Jackson, the chief executive of Channel Four.

Locals have bemoaned the influx of wealthy executives in recent years, but

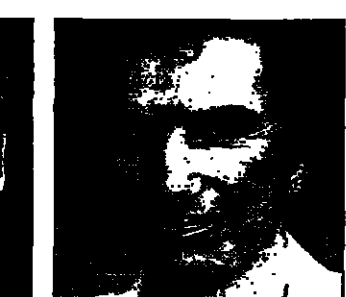
the area hasn't lost all of its bohemian charm. Helen Fielding, the author of *Bridget Jones's Diary*, rents offices around the corner; the crime writer R.F. Keating and the art historian Christopher Wright still live nearby.

Having bought the three-bedroom house, Mr Mandelson took enormous pride in decorating it. The minister is a minimalist by nature, and he called in 38-year-old Mr Stein, a protégé of Richard Rogers and Norman Foster, to effect the transformation from cosy family home to modernist shrine.

Mr Stein likes straight, simple, sleek lines, and uncluttered rooms. "I think



Mandelson's neighbours in Notting Hill: John Birt, Ian Wigglesworth and Carla Powell



white prints from the Special Photographers Company in Notting Hill.

Chris Kewbank, the owner, remembers the minister buying a 1938 Wolf gang Suschitzky of people at a Lyon Corner House. Everyone who has crossed the threshold has been impressed.

"The house is huge and it has a lovely kitchen," said one visitor who was allowed a brief glimpse inside. Mr Mandelson even helped to organise a summer street party last year, when trestle tables were laid out for the food, and Ben Bradshaw, the MP for Exeter, entertained guests with an over-enthusiastic hokey-cokey.

Notting Hill is Mandelson country all right. But the question that swirled around the bars at Westminster was: How on earth did Peter pay for it?

Caught in a battle of cabinet giants

Man in the middle: Robinson's part in feud between Brown and Mandelson **Ewen MacAskill and Seumas Milne report**

IT IS Geoffrey Robinson's fate to find himself at the centre of the most enduring and explosive internal conflict at the heart of the Government.

Tony Blair tried to end the feud between his Chancellor, Gordon Brown, and his closest political ally, Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Mandelson, in the July reshuffle.

But the truce, such as it was, barely survived the summer and now, as a result of the latest revelations, the stage is set for full-scale hostilities to be rejoined.

For the two most powerful politicians after Mr Blair to be at war is destabilising and dangerous for the Government. Mr Robinson is a friend of both.

His relationship with Mr Mandelson goes back 20 years, but he is also a Treasury minister and a key member of Mr Brown's "hotel group" — the core coterie of his closest advisers who meet regularly in Mr Robinson's

suite at the Grosvenor House Hotel. Neither side is out to get him personally — he just happens to be in the way as the bullets fly.

Already vulnerable about his business dealings and tax arrangements, Mr Robinson could end up the main casualty from the disclosure of his low-interest loan for Mr Mandelson.

Mr Mandelson will inevitably be undermined by the exposure of his private loan with Mr Robinson.

Although he would rather it had not come out, there may be a plus side. His camp believes that the story of his home loan is the main selling point of a hostile biography by the Mirror journalist Paul Routledge, scheduled for serialisation in the Sunday Times next month, and that sting has now been drawn.

At the beginning of this year, a semi-authorised biography of the Chancellor by

Mr Routledge — who is a close friend of Gordon Brown's chief press officer, Charlie Whelan — led to recriminations between the Blair and Brown camps, after it highlighted Mr Brown's continuing bitterness at Mr Blair's capture of the Labour leadership four years ago.

The leadership race — and Mr Mandelson's decision to campaign for Mr Blair, rather than his other longstanding protégé, Mr Brown — was the origin of the feud.

Even though Mr Mandelson does not know who leaked the details of the loan to *The Guardian*, he and his allies are likely to blame the Brown camp.

Mr Whelan is already widely believed to have co-operated with Mr Routledge over his Mandelson book, though the Chancellor's press secretary has been anxious to distance himself from the project.

Mr Whelan did not leak information about the private loan to the *Guardian*.

While many journalists are drawn to him as an alternative voice in an administration otherwise defined by centralised control, Downing Street regard him as a maverick.

The summer reshuffle was the first serious blow to Mr Brown's power base, stopping just short of humiliation. Out went Mr Brown's key lieutenants: Nick Brown, the chief whip, was transferred to Agriculture; Nigel Griffiths, consumer affairs minister, and Tom Clarke, film and tourism minister, were both sacked. Doug Henderson was shifted from the key post of minister for Europe to minister for the armed forces.

Mr Brown had to fight hard to keep Mr Robinson and Mr Whelan, who Downing Street hoped would adopt a lower profile. "He has been put in his cage and he had better stay there," a Downing Street aide said.

Mr Blair also sought to help heal the breach between Mr Mandelson and Mr Brown by

asking the Chancellor to tell Mr Mandelson of his cabinet promotion in the hope this might improve relations between the two.

For a while, the move seemed to have been effective. But two inter-departmental

spats between the Treasury and the Trade and Industry Department have stoked the tensions.

Treasury sources were cited in media reports this autumn arguing that Mr Mandelson's power to rule in com-

petition cases should be removed and pointing to his closeness to business interests.

More recently, Treasury sources were quoted blaming Mr Mandelson — who has himself been heard complain-

ing in public about the Brown camp — for "bottling out" of privatising the Post Office, while elsewhere the Chancellor was said by the same sources to have saved the Post Office from privatisation.



Brought to book... Biography of Gordon Brown by a friend of Charlie Whelan (right) led to recriminations between the Blair and Brown camps

Terms brought £10,000 saving

THE LOAN: Bank base rate deal that few borrowers could expect

BY REPAYING the interest on the £373,000 loan from Geoffrey Robinson at a rate equivalent to bank base rate, Peter Mandelson would have saved himself almost £10,000 compared to an ordinary borrower paying the standard mortgage rate.

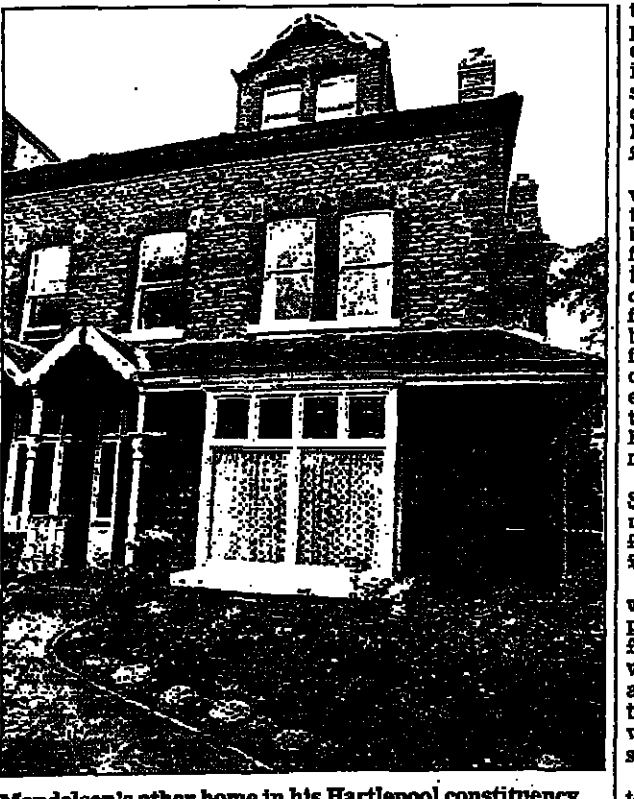
Whatever the interest rate, no mainstream lender would have offered someone earning £40,000 a year a £373,000 mortgage.

Assuming the loan started in November 1996 and the first payment was due in the December, the interest alone for the first instalment would be £1,865 on base rate. This compares to £2,172 for someone with a £373,000 loan from the Halifax on its standard variable rate — a difference of £307.

The repayment of £40,000 in the spring of 1997 would have cut the payments. The gap widened out by the start of this year.

In January 1998 the monthly interest payment on the base rate-linked loan would have been £2,011, while for the Halifax borrower it would have been £2,414 — a difference of £403.

Interest rates continued to rise but then held steady for a few months before starting to



Mandelson's other home in his Hartlepool constituency

fall, bringing lower payments in October-November this year.

This month's payment on the base rate-linked loan would be £1,734, while for the Halifax borrower it would be £2,276 — some £541 more.

Over the 25 months the loan has been in force and assuming the £40,000 repayment was made on April 1 1997, the total interest paid on the loan

would be £49,580 in the case of the base rate-linked arrangement and £59,580 for the Halifax borrower.

This works out at a difference of £9,886. Alliance & Leicester said it would lend 3.75 times the salary if the loan was less than 75 per cent of the property's value. Otherwise it is limited to 3.3 times salary.

The bank said that it would

take other earnings and prospects for the future into account, and on someone earning £50,000 a year (MP's salary with some journalism/other earnings), with the hope of more, it might lend £200,000.

No home loans company would fund the gap between that figure and the £373,000, but other lenders can be found who would bridge the two figures if the borrower could come up with other forms of collateral such as a business, an investment portfolio, art or even the prospect of a large inheritance. However, borrowers would have to expect to pay 3 or 4 per cent higher interest rates than the mortgage.

The Nationwide Building Society said it would be "very unlikely" to lend someone on £40,000-a-year the sum of £373,000.

"As a fairly rough guide we would work on 3.25 times a person's income. If it was £40,000 they could expect that we would lend them up to about £130,000, based on their total earnings," said a spokeswoman for the building society.

But if the person intended to get another loan for the amount needed to bridge the gap between the £130,000 and £373,000, this would almost certainly affect the calculations.

MPs are something of a special case. Their "contract" might be renewed by the voters but then again it might not. In November 1996 there was no guarantee that Mr Mandelson would retain his job as an MP, let alone become a minister.

W. & J. GRAHAM'S
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Quintessence (kwintessence) late ME. [- Fr. quintessence, 1. quinte essence - med. 1. fifth essence.] 1. The 'fifth essence' of ancient and modern philosophy, the substance of which the heavenly bodies were composed. b. The cats whiskers 15. The purest or most perfect form or manifestation of a quality. c. The purest or most perfect form or manifestation of a quality. d. The bees knees e. Consummate; of the highest quality. f. Model of excellence; superior. g. Impeccable; Not liable to error. h. Sublime; exalted, superior. i. The top dog. j. The most refined of its kind.

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Iraq: After the missiles

Britain still backs the work of Unscorn and its chairman, Richard Butler, who Moscow and Paris want sacked

Frantic effort to heal rifts in UN

SECURITY COUNCIL: The Big Five are looking at new ways to disarm Saddam. Ian Black, and Mark Tran in New York, report

THE United States and Britain faced a bruising row with fellow members of the United Nations Security Council last night as they sought agreement to resume efforts to disarm Iraq in the aftermath of Operation Desert Fox.

As ambassadors of the Big Five met in New York — with Russia, China and France still furious over the attacks — Britain launched an intensive diplomatic campaign to build a new consensus for containing Saddam Hussein, though it gave no ground to critics of air strikes.

But France took the lead in pushing for "fresh methods" in a less intrusive arms inspection programme, whose effect would be to dilute US and British influence over the United Nations Special Commission (Unscorn) — and linking the new programme to an easing of UN sanctions.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, insisted that Britain was not isolated and said he was looking at ways to tighten the enforcement of sanctions to target the Baghdad regime, while easing the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Mr Cook won support from his German counterpart, Joschka Fischer, for a European Union initiative to increase humanitarian aid. Germany takes over the EU's rotating presidency on January 1.

But there was sharp conflict with France's demand for moves to ease the embargo.

"What we will be seeking to do is to build the broadest possible consensus in the international community

against Saddam and making sure that he is as isolated as possible... in the international community and among his own people," Mr Cook said.

He said President Saddam had not been making full use of the UN programme which allows him to sell oil to buy food and medicine.

"It's not going to be easy," he told BBC Radio, "because Saddam does everything possible to obstruct and prevent



Robin Cook and Joschka Fischer in London yesterday

it, and it is very difficult to operate in Iraq without Saddam's agreement given the brutality and savagery with which he represses all opposition."

Britain insisted it still backed the work of Unscorn and its Australian chairman, Richard Butler, whom Moscow and Paris want sacked.

It was Mr Butler's report on Iraqi non-compliance which triggered last week's air strikes, amid charges that he

had secretly colluded with Washington and London.

The US and Britain say Unscorn would return only if its inspectors were allowed to work properly. Iraq, accusing them of spying, has said they cannot return at all.

Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, yesterday condemned Mr Butler and said the inspection process had ended when London and Washington began air strikes.

"The moment America and Britain launched missiles against Iraq they killed Unscorn," he told a news conference in Baghdad.

Mr Aziz said Iraq's main grievance about Unscorn was its "domination" by London and Washington. Pressed on whether the inspectors could

ric of a liar," Mr Aziz said. Privately, Washington and London acknowledge that if the UN inspection teams do return and are again frustrated by Iraq's tactics of concealment and obstruction, it will strengthen the hand of those who want to give President Saddam the benefit of the doubt — and undercut their own calls for a change of regime.

France is suggesting a new kind of Unscorn, more like the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency. "This assumes a new structure and a new function, so it would not be the same Unscorn even if it kept the same name," said Hubert Vedrine, the foreign minister.

The UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, sidelined by Desert Fox, wants an inspection regime that combines elements of the atomic energy agency with those of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, a Vienna-based body that monitors the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Asked about the divisions in the Security Council, Mr Annan said: "I would hope that in the weeks ahead we will find a way of bringing everyone together, so that we can carry on the essential work of the council."

Mr Vedrine also called for a movement towards lifting the seven-year oil embargo. But Derek Fatchett, the junior Foreign Office minister, insisted Britain could not now support the long-promised "comprehensive review" of the UN's Iraq policy in the light of Baghdad's continued defiance.

Derek Plumbly, the FO's director for the Middle East and architect of Britain's Iraq policy, flies to Paris today to try to find common ground with the Quai D'Orsay.

Tariq Aziz and Hugo Young, page 10; Leader comment and Letters, page 11



A street vendor in Baghdad yesterday. Saddam Hussein's presence is felt everywhere

PHOTOGRAPH: MURAD SEZER

Saddam keeps iron grip on Iraq

BAGHDAD: Despite damage to key buildings life continues much as before, says David Sharrock

SADDAM Hussein's grip on life in Iraq shows no signs of slipping. In spite of four days of intensive bombing of his command-and-control centres.

In the capital nothing has changed, except that at least four prominent buildings are no longer available for use by his security apparatus: the military industrialisation commission, the ministry of defence, the internal security headquarters and offices of the ruling Ba'ath party. All had been visited by Unscorn weapons inspectors before last week's air raids.

Even the spectacle of their near-demolition does not draw a second glance from passers-by — partly, perhaps, through fear, but also a general feeling of weariness with Iraq's seemingly endless wars with the outside world.

As for internal dissent, there is no evidence to suggest that an army mutiny — realistically the only arm of the state that could topple Saddam — is close at hand.

The aerial bombardments

of Saddam's fiercely loyal Republican Guard bases may have inflicted thousands of casualties — as Nizar Hamdon, Iraq's ambassador to the UN, hinted — but the likelihood remains that, as in the Gulf war, we will never know how many soldiers and civilians were killed by last week's onslaught.

The destruction of tens of thousands of files on the Iraqi population inside internal security headquarters is also unlikely to give serious encouragement to would-be revolutionaries. The Baghdad newspapers reported the execution of several soldiers for disobeying orders at the weekend but no further details were given.

A report in a British Sunday newspaper that soldiers were rebelling in the south of the country, in the city of Basra, was rejected as nonsense by government officials. A more credible rebuttal came in the fact that foreign television news crews were taken there to film damage inflicted by the bombing

— hardly likely if there was a serious and genuine rebellion taking place.

"It is ridiculous, just wishful thinking," said Naji Hadithi, a senior foreign ministry official who is to become Iraq's next ambassador to Vienna early next year. "Security in Iraq has never been better."

In Baghdad's busy open markets there is no shortage of the basic food staple of rice, bread and vegetables, and while people are having to sell off personal possessions to maintain their families there are no signs of the kind of poverty that could ignite a popular uprising.

In street markets such as Al Saray an extraordinary array of goods is on sale, from ironing boards and antique clocks to the last wing and rusty nut of painstakingly dismantled cars. The eclectic selection of secondhand books bears witness to the fact that Iraqis are in general educated and inquisitive people.

Spotting unfamiliar faces in the crowd, however, one woman shouted "When are you going to lift the embargo?" — a reference to the eight-year-old sanctions that have ground people down.

Some of the UN's humanitarian aid workers are ex-

pected to begin returning from Jordan today, save for those who have taken Christmas and New Year leave. Unscorn is not expected back at all, although Naji Hadithi said the inspectors would be welcome to return if the sanctions were lifted.

"They can return to continue the monitoring activity, to show that we are not constructing new weapons, but the disarmament of Iraq is over," he said.

"The Americans and British have destroyed most of the factories that Unscorn is monitoring so their work is complete. We cannot live any longer with Unscorn and the sanctions; it has to be one or the other."

As for Iraq's leader, apart from two pre-recorded video messages aired on the Al Jazeera satellite TV network, the Arab world's equivalent of CNN, nothing has been seen of him since before the bombing. Officials could not say if he had visited any of the damaged sites or would be making a public appearance.

"He is moving around but because of the circumstances nobody knows his itinerary," said one. But just looking at the streets, even in his absence, the presence of Saddam is felt everywhere.

Aziz reveals military death toll

THE DAMAGE: Baghdad and Britain assess the air raids. Richard Norton-Taylor reports

IN AN unprecedented disclosure, Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, said yesterday that 62 soldiers were killed and 180 injured in the four nights of air strikes.

General Sir Charles Guthrie, chief of the defence staff, has indicated that Republican Guard bases attacked by RAF Tornados caught Saddam Hussein's elite soldiers by surprise.

It is not known how many Iraqi civilians were killed.

It also emerged yesterday that British and US air strikes disrupted the distribution of supplies under the United Nations oil-for-food programme.

The UN humanitarian co-ordinator in Iraq, Hans von

Spoonek, said the strikes had also destroyed a warehouse full of rice in Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's home town 100 miles north of Baghdad. The warehouse was managed by the UN World Food Programme. It is an example of how even the most accurate missiles and bombs can go astray.

Defence analysts said yesterday that cruise missiles might have been shot down or diverted by Iraqi air defence systems. British ministers say President Saddam hides weapons systems in civilian buildings just as he orders civilians to occupy military targets.

But US naval commanders conceded yesterday that more than a quarter of the laser-

guided bombs dropped by planes from the American aircraft carrier the USS Enterprise missed their targets. Aircraft from the carrier flew more than 300 missions.

Nevertheless, the view was expressed yesterday that the generally high level of accuracy during the campaign coupled with the absence of any British or US aircraft casualties had profound implications for the future of armed conflict.

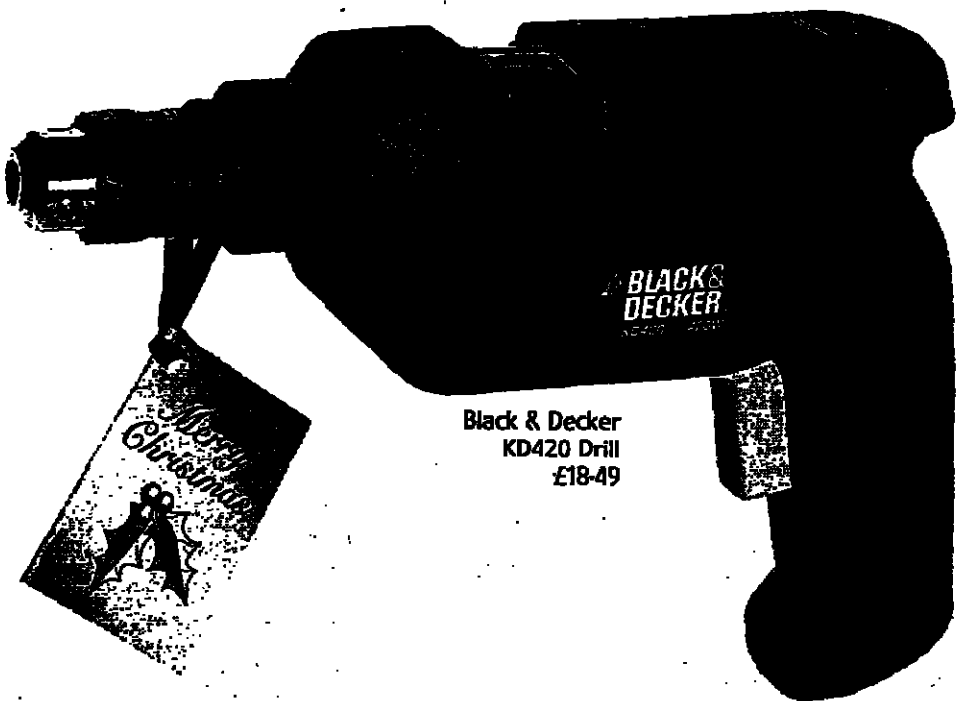
"War is becoming easier — easier to contemplate," Rear Admiral Richard Cobbold, director of the Royal United Services Institute, told the Guardian. Hundreds of bombs hitting Iraqi targets did not divert US politicians from President Clinton's impeachment or Britons from going about their Christmas shopping, the analyst said. Even the residents of Baghdad appeared confident that the bombs would only hit their military targets.

Tony Blair's spokesman said yesterday that the latest assessments of sites hit included 30 involved in production and delivery of weapons of mass destruction; 20 command and control facilities and communications networks; nine connected with the elite Republican Guard; and six targets related to what ministers are calling Iraq's "drones of death" — unmanned aircraft designed to drop chemical weapons.

Downing Street released new pictures showing damage to the Tallil airfield, where shelters are used to protect aircraft from attack, the Al Kut barracks housing an armoured brigade of the Republican Guard, and Ba'ath party buildings used to hide equipment for weapons of mass destruction.

Other targets included a presidential palace and a presidential bunker, both part of the command and control network.

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President impeached

The Republicans' poll rating is the lowest since 1992, the year Mr Clinton ousted President George Bush



Republicans pay price as ratings dive

VOTERS: The party which impeached Clinton is braced for more damaging exposures on its own side, writes **Martin Kettle**

THE political tumult in Washington over the past few days has not just put Bill Clinton's future on the line. It has also posed fundamental questions about what happens now in the Republican Party which impeached him.

The votes which sent Mr Clinton to trial were overwhelmingly Republican votes — 223 out of the 228 votes for impeachment on perjury, and 216 out of the 221 votes for impeachment on obstruction of justice. The key question now is what impact those votes will have on the internal politics of the party and on its standing with the American people.

Yesterday, one of the house journals of conservative Republicans, the Rupert Mur-

doch-owned Weekly Standard, published its post-impeachment issue. The cover headline left no doubt how the party's right-wing ideologues see Saturday's historic events. It read "Their Finest Hour".

But the right-wing exaltation came against a backdrop of some of the Republican Party's worst poll ratings in the current decade. In yesterday's post-impeachment Gallup poll for CNN and USA Today, only 31 per cent of Americans said they had a favourable view of the Republicans, down 12 points from 43 per cent approval in only a single week.

This is the lowest Republican poll rating since 1992, the year in which Mr Clinton ousted President George Bush.

In addition, the Republicans have impeached Mr Clinton at a heavy cost to



Ex-House Speaker Newt Gingrich, left, and Bob Livingston



themselves. The drive to elect the president has so far only claimed Republican scalps: first, the defeats in the November mid-term elections, then the overthrow of House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and now the stunning resignation of his prospective successor Bob Livingston.

Mr Livingston fell because he was threatened with the exposure of his extra-marital sex life. He was the latest Republican victim of a dirty tricks tabloid culture — and possibly also of a White House-backed dirty tricks campaign — that has also scored recent hits against judicial committee chairman Henry Hyde, government oversight committee chairman Dan Burton, and "family values" campaigner Congresswoman Helen Chenoweth.

Republicans are uneasily aware that Mr Livingston may not be the last to suffer. The pornography publisher Larry Flynt, who offered \$1 million for information about Republican sex scandals and whose investigations tipped

Livingston towards resignation, has threatened to expose up to a dozen more members of Congress in the next three weeks. One of them, Mr Flynt said at the weekend, would be "a really, really big fish".

The loss of Mr Livingston means that his heir presumptive is certain to have a more than usually difficult job in pulling the party together on

common response on Saturday when the former wrestling coach emerged as the man most likely to grapple with the Livingston legacy.

Mr Hastert, 56, has sat in the House for 12 years. Though initially viewed by the party's right-wing as insufficiently conservative, Mr Hastert has risen almost invisibly because of his close political ties to the Republican House whip, Tom "The Hammer" DeLay of Texas, whose unbending determination to impeach Mr Clinton was one of the decisive reasons behind Saturday's voting.

The latest prospective Speaker is said to command respect as a deal maker and man of his word. Certainly he has fewer outright enemies in Congress than Mr Gingrich always had. He is also certain to take a lower profile than either of his predecessors. But events could change that.

The Republican Party badly needs a unifying figure who can appeal to more than just the party's rank and file. The latest polls underline the gap

opening between the party on Capitol Hill and the party in the country.

To the ideologues, that question does not seem to matter. "The House Republicans risked their political future to pursue an apparently unpopular objective," the Weekly Standard's opinion editor David Tell wrote yesterday. But, he added, "this story will smile on these Republicans; they may never live a nobler moment".

For elected politicians, however, history is a luxury. This is especially true of politicians who face re-election as often as members of the US House of Representatives, and must face the voters every two years. The impeachment vote has come at the very beginning of the political cycle, which is probably one reason why so many Republican undecideds felt able to toe the party line on Saturday. But the question is whether it will be held against them in 22 months time.

Opinion polls can be volatile, but the latest Gallup poll definitely contains long-term

warnings for the Republicans.

First, the Republican standing among women voters continues to slide. Only 24 per cent of American women viewed the party favourably in the latest poll, compared with 39 per cent of men. This figure emphasises and intensifies the increasingly pronounced gender gap in US politics.

Second, the Republicans are viewed most favourably by young and young middle-aged voters and least favourably by old middle-aged and old voters. This is potentially very damaging, as older voters are more likely to vote.

Third, the Republicans continue to be well regarded by their own voters, of whom 61 per cent still think favourably of them. Not surprisingly, their rating is poor among Democrats, only 9 per cent of whom are favourable. But it is also poor among independent, non-aligned and moderate voters, where only 29 per cent view the Republicans favourably — and these are the voters who swing elections.

Lawyers try to avert trial for Clinton

CUTTING A DEAL: Experts wrestle with constitution's fine print, writes **Julian Borger**

WHILE Washington's political functionaries, flacksters and pundits left for holidays long-delayed by impeachment, the White House lawyers stayed behind yesterday in a search for escape routes from a drawn-out Senate trial.

The president's lawyers are examining a string of options, from challenging the constitutional legality of the process to pursuing delaying tactics over procedural issues, in an attempt to block the two charges of perjury and obstruction of justice from even being considered by the upper house.

If that strategy fails — and all but the most optimistic White House legal advisers believe that it can only delay matters — the favoured alternative is to convince senators to accept a quick vote of censure in place of an impeachment trial. The worst-case White House scenario is for the president to be forced into a dogged defence in Senate proceedings which might drag on for months with appearances by key personalities such as Monica Lewinsky and Linda Tripp.

The first line of defence is based on a constitutional amendment passed in 1933, shortening the time between congressional elections and the convening of a new congress.

According to Bruce Ackerman, a Yale law professor who argued the Democrats' case before the judiciary committee, the 30th amendment's intention was to prevent a lame-duck congress saddling a newly-elected body (in this case one with a slimmer Republican majority) with weighty resolutions like impeachment.

But in yesterday's Washington Post, John Nagle (another law professor and an authority on the 30th amendment) said: "Both the constitutional text and the history since 1933 suggest that Congress is within its rights to act during a lame duck session."

Most senators quoted yes-

terday, from both sides of the aisle, appeared to agree. Dianne Feinstein, a liberal California Democrat said: "It is my belief that this continues on through the change of sessions."

The White House lawyers, however, have another possible trick up their sleeve. Along with the two articles of impeachment the House also passed a series of enabling resolutions appointing and funding a brace of Republicans as prosecutors, or "managers" for a Senate trial.

Most constitutional lawyers agree that those resolutions would have to be confirmed by the new House of Representatives when it convenes on January 6. Without managers, the argument runs, there can be no trial.

Donald Wolfensberger, a former Republican chief of staff on the House rules committee, said: "If you have no managers appointed in the next Congress, well, it just stops there, then."

But although this argument may be on firmer legal ground, it is likely to come across politically as a nifty trick and sneaky manner for the president to avoid judgement. In any case the Republicans in the new House are likely to vote with the party whip on such procedural items despite staunch public opposition to a trial.

Two former presidents, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, have thrown Bill Clinton a potential lifeline with a proposal published in yesterday's New York Times for the Senate to agree on a censure resolution — "a unique punishment for a unique set of offences".

The presidential spokesman, Joe Lockhart gave a cautious welcome to the ex-presidents' initiative yesterday but said Mr Clinton was leaving all his options open.

The problem with the proposal is that it would require Mr Clinton to acknowledge "that he did not tell the truth under oath" — something he has so far resolutely refused to do.

work and Jon Snow of Britain's Channel Four, are to take place in Los Angeles during the holiday season, though no final dates have been set for the interviews or their transmission.

The interviews are due to air simultaneously on opposite sides of the Atlantic, with the transmission date likely to be determined by the ABC schedules and the timing of the Senate trial.

The prospect of Ms Lewinsky giving her side of the relationship with Mr Clinton in evidence to the Senate trial is said to appeal all sides in Washington. The possibility that she might have to sit for several days in the august surroundings of the Senate giving details of when, where and how Mr



Monica Lewinsky... what she says in new year television interviews will command worldwide media attention

PHOTOGRAPH: DAN LOH

Lewinsky TV interviews could be the ticking timebomb

KEY PLAYER: Questions at the heart of the case will be put to ex-intern, writes **Martin Kettle**

MONICA Lewinsky dominated the crisis of Bill Clinton's presidency throughout this year, and she is set to be the ticking timebomb of the dramas in 1999 too.

The former White House intern, whose taped telephone conversations about her relationship with Mr Clinton triggered the events that have culminated in the president's impeachment, is weeks away from giving television interviews that are certain to have an effect on the spec-

work and Jon Snow of Britain's Channel Four, are to take place in Los Angeles during the holiday season, though no final dates have been set for the interviews or their transmission.

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The prospect of Ms Lewinsky giving her side of the relationship with Mr Clinton in evidence to the Senate trial is said to appeal all sides in Washington. The possibility that she might have to sit for several days in the august surroundings of the Senate giving details of when, where and how Mr

Clinton touched different parts of her body is a powerful incentive in moves to avert a full-length hearing.

But the interviews are likely to go ahead regardless of the trial. What she says will inevitably command worldwide media attention, and it will also affect the argument about Mr Clinton's guilt or innocence and have an influence on calculations about the Senate process.

The sections of Ms Lewinsky's interviews that will matter politically and legally will be the parts dealing with the questions at the heart of the impeachment charges: whether Mr Clinton asked her to lie about their relationship and whether he tried to ar-

range her cooperation by arranging job assistance.

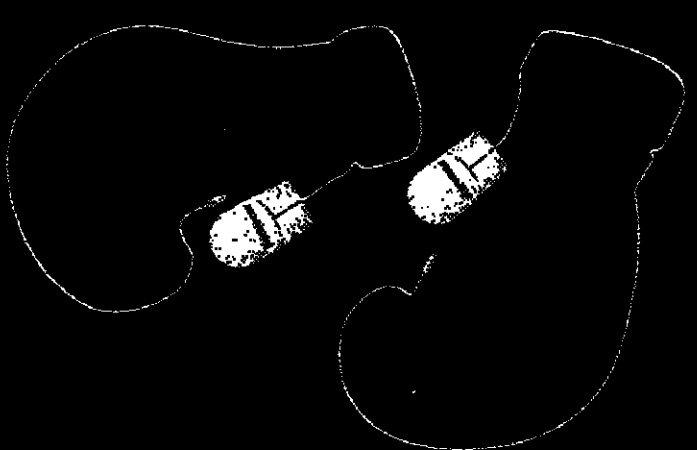
Ms Lewinsky denied both charges when interviewed by independent counsel Kenneth Starr's investigators and in answer to questions by members of the federal grand jury investigating Mr Clinton, so lawyers on both sides will be watching to see if she leans one way or the other in her latest descriptions of events at the very centre of the case.

Apart from her appearance in front of the grand jury in July, a transcript of which was included in the material sent by Mr Starr to Congress along with his report in September, Ms Lewinsky has never spoken publicly about her relation-

ship with Mr Clinton. She left Washington some weeks ago and spent the autumn with her mother in New York. She has recently moved back to Los Angeles, where she was brought up and where her father still lives. She is working on a book on her experiences, as well as preparing for the interviews.

No matter how attentively she courts obscurity, Ms Lewinsky remains an iconic figure around the world. Last week, the Russian parliament debated a proposal to ask her to use her influence with Mr Clinton to bring the bombing of Iraq to an end. Meanwhile, in Iraq itself, an official dubbed the air assault "Operation Monica".

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Lockerbie's 10th anniversary



The Rev David Almond prepares to officiate at the service at Dryfesdale parish church where the Duke of Edinburgh laid a wreath

PHOTOGRAPH: ADAM BUTLER

Piper's lament breaks through the silence

Gerard Seenan on commemoration of night when Pan Am bomb killed 270

At 7.03pm the silence fell. The American voices which had whispered tales of bereavement quietened. The world's media, previously desperate for a quote, were mute. The local accents of a town which never wanted to be famous could no longer be heard.

For one minute the

people of Lockerbie stopped and a lone piper's lament followed as they remembered the night 10 years ago when a single green dot on a radar screen split first into five and then disappeared, marking the end of Pan Am Flight 103.

The death of 259 passengers and crew — and, four minutes later, 11 residents of Sherwood Crescent — followed.

In London, New York and Washington, they remembered also. Big cities are used to the public gaze, but the red sandstone walls of Dryfesdale church have had only a decade to be-

come used to the attention thrust upon its parish when at 7.03 pm on December 21, 1988, the Maid of the Seas exploded in the skies above the town.

The Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, told the congregation at the ecumenical memorial service: "I remember the pain, the shock and the grief of that night. Those events broke violently and tragically into the lives of victims, their relatives and friends, the emergency services and all who lived in Lockerbie."

Mr Dewar brought a message of support from Tony Blair. Cathy Hirst, from the

US consulate in Scotland, read out Bill Clinton's pledge to bring justice to Lockerbie. The Queen also sent messages of support and condolence.

Earlier the Duke of Edinburgh laid a wreath in front of the stone monument at Dryfesdale Memorial Garden. Pat Keegan, the priest who counselled many of the Lockerbie families, offered an eulogy.

"You will see us laying wreaths at your stone. We want you to be sure that these wreaths are not hollow, empty gestures but a statement and declaration of promise... We will

not rest until we have justice and truth, until all responsible for your deaths are held accountable."

Last night's memorial service will probably be the last in Lockerbie. The town does not wish to forget the night when a bomb in a Toshiba radio cassette player on board the New York-bound plane exploded overhead. But it wants to be left to remember in private.

The victims of Britain's largest mass murder came from 21 countries. They included 188 Americans and 44 Britons. Lockerbie yesterday gave their families a final chance to grieve collectively.

Saudi murder case nurse facing Scots jail term for theft

Gerard Seenan

LUCILLE McLaughlan, the nurse imprisoned in a Saudi jail for her alleged part in the murder of an Australian colleague, was yesterday facing the possibility of a jail sentence in Britain after being found guilty of theft and fraud.

McLaughlan, aged 33, stole \$300 from the bank account of a 79-year-old patient who was in her care while she was a senior staff nurse at King's Cross Hospital, Dundee, in 1996.

At Dundee sheriff court yesterday, she was found guilty of stealing the money from the bank account of Helen Lewis, aged 79. She was also found guilty of handling the stolen bank card and of submitting forged references. Sheriff Alistair Stewart postponed sentence until January 18 for background reports.

It is almost exactly two years since McLaughlan was arrested in Saudi Arabia with

fellow nurse, Deborah Parry, by police investigating the murder of their colleague Yvonne Gilford at the medical complex where all three worked. She was jailed for eight years and sentenced to 17 months in jail but was freed earlier this year after Tony Blair petitioned King Fahd of Saudi Arabia for their release on compassionate grounds.

One of the most crucial

pieces of evidence which helped convict McLaughlan of the theft was a 24-minute video of her withdrawing \$300 from a Bank of Scotland branch at Nethergate, Dundee, in the early morning of March 11, 1996. She was unable to explain why she was at the bank despite not having an account there, and Sheriff Stewart said the tapes provided "irrefutable evidence" of her guilt.

While it is theoretically possible that she was making a balance inquiry or keying in a wrong number, I think to give weight to that is to indulge in fanciful speculation which juries are directed to avoid," he said.

Although she was convicted of using the bank card, McLaughlan was acquitted of stealing it from Mrs Lewis. She was also cleared of using the forged references, which the court said contained complete lies, to obtain her job in Saudi Arabia.

However, Sheriff Stewart said the references, which McLaughlan submitted to the

Speedwell Nurses Recruitment Agency, were part of "a clearly thought out and planned pattern of deceit with a view to obtaining employment abroad".

McLaughlan — who was charged under her married name of Ferrie — was impulsive as the sheriff read out his verdicts. As she left the court she refused to speak to reporters, and her lawyer, Billy Boyle, said he would not comment until sentence had been delivered.

The former nurse was suspended by King's Cross Hospital in April 1996 after a police investigation into the missing bank card. On May



Ex-nurse Lucille McLaughlan at court in Dundee yesterday, when she was convicted of stealing \$300 from a patient's bank account

PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD

14, she was sacked after a hospital hearing. By that time she had approached the Speedwell agency inquiring about work abroad. Soon afterwards she was given a job at the King Fahd military hospital in Saudi Arabia.

McLaughlan, who is now four months pregnant, married her long-term boyfriend Grant Ferrie while in the Saudi prison. She maintains that she is innocent of any crime in Saudi Arabia, and on returning to Britain, she sold her story to a tabloid newspaper for around \$100,000.

The brother of Yvonne Gilford has accused her of casting in on his sister's death.

McLaughlan was charged yesterday with the murder of Sharon Lester, the young mother who was found battered to death this weekend.

Thomas John Park, aged 24 and unemployed, appeared before Liverpool city magistrates charged with the murder of Ms Lester, 22, and burglary at her home.

Park spoke only to confirm his name, age and address. After a four-minute hearing, he was remanded in police custody until tomorrow. There was no application for bail and reporting restrictions were not lifted.

Police also confirmed yesterday that the body of a two-year-old child dumped on scrubland in Liverpool was that of Sharon Lester's daughter, Jade, who had not been seen for a week.

Her body was discovered in a bin bag tied up with string on a covered reservoir 300 yards from her home in the Kensington area of the city.

The bag, lying beneath a clump of overgrown weeds, was spotted by police officers, acting on information received, late on Sunday. Jade's body was fully clothed and a post mortem was established how she died.

Detective Superintendent

Man charged in Sharon Lester murder case

Police say body of two-year-old found dumped in bin bag is dead woman's missing daughter

David Ward

Russ Walsh, who heads the double murder inquiry for Merseyside police, said it appeared mother and daughter had died about the same time. Jade had been killed and then taken to the spot where her body was found.

"Sharon was a devoted mother," he said. "Jade was a well-cared-for child and well loved."

The body of Ms Lester, who had been beaten and stabbed, was discovered by her mother lying at her home, where yesterday the curtains remained closed as officers continued forensic inquiries. A single bunch of flowers lay at the front of the house.

Ms Lester, who may have been killed up to 48 hours before she was found, grew up in the Kensington area of Liverpool and attended nearby Breckfield comprehensive.

Mr Walsh said she had studied typing and had also worked in a local grocer's shop. "She was very much a local girl," said Mr Walsh.

"We would like to build up a picture of where she went, who she met, her general lifestyle. She must have had some sort of social circle. We just have not found it yet."

Mr Walsh said officers had not yet traced Jade's father. "Unfortunately Sharon did not divulge the name of the father to her family," he said. "We are having great diffi-

culty in tracking the father down. If he is aware of what's happened, then we would like him to contact us. It is quite important to the investigation that we trace him."

Two men seen in the area with a white van have come forward and been eliminated from any involvement. Mr Walsh said they had a "valuable evidence". But he renewed his appeal for a man seen working on a yellow van in Ling Street to come forward.

He said detectives had been asked by the two men "When you see a child of that age [dead], it upsets you."

Sharon's mother, Dorothy Lester, collapsed with shock when she discovered the body of her daughter and was yesterday described as "totally devastated". A man who answered the door at her home said: "She is far too upset to talk. She collapsed when she heard that Jade was dead too."

Sarah Walker, aged 21, went to school with Ms Lester. "Whoever did that has got to be sick," she said. "Sharon never bothered anyone. She wasn't a fighter. She didn't cause any trouble."

"I saw Jade's grandmother on Saturday and she was in a bad state. She was crying to the police. Please just get my Jade. I'm burying my daughter. I don't want to bury my granddaughter as well."

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Friends amazed as 'scruffy old vicar with heart of gold' leaves millions in his will

Amelia Gentieman

WHEN the retired vicar of St John's Church in Dagenham, Essex, died earlier this year, colleagues believed he was so impoverished they would have to organise a special collection to pay for his funeral.

So they were surprised to discover that the vicar, who lived on a council estate and drove a battered car, had left more than \$6 million in his will.

The Rev Sir James Roll, who died aged 87 in February, did not inherit his money but accumulated it through investments.

His astonishing friends recalled him as a kind, humble man. "He was the archetypal scruffy old vicar, with a heart of gold," said the Rev Roger Gayler, of the neighbouring St Mark's Church, near Dagenham. "He had an ill-fitting dog collar, his mac had certainly seen better days

— even his false teeth didn't quite fit. Money just didn't matter to him."

A close friend, former St John's churchwarden Lynn Foster, said: "I knew he had some money, but he invested it wisely in insurance schemes."

Sir James, whose estate was valued at \$5,387,216,

left \$200,000 to a variety of animal, homeless and children's charities. The bulk of his fortune goes to his elderly step-sister and other distant relatives.

He also left \$10,000 to St Clement's Church, Leigh-on-Sea, his last home to which he invited deprived children for holidays.

The figures showed evidence that low income areas, with fewer outlets and less competition, were regularly paying more. Mr Powers said: "When we meet the stores, we will be very pleased to take our evidence to them. We want to work together."

different types of Christmas turkey.

The Rev Peter Powers of the foundation welcomed the stores' offer to meet, but stood by the survey's figures.

He said: "The supermarkets talk about national pricing policies, but that isn't always the same as national availability. We told our monitors to buy the cheapest version

they could find of each item in our 'test basket' and that is what they did."

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Supermarkets deny imposing higher food prices in low income areas

Martin Wainwright

SUPERMARKETS hit back yesterday at claims from a "citizen's survey" that price variations nationwide are penalising low income districts. Two of the big food chains, Sainsbury's and Asda, questioned the methodology of the 100 samplings carried out in

early December by the Citizens Organising Foundation. Both accepted a challenge to meet the group — a network of local campaigning organisations — to sort out a common approach. A spokesman for Asda said: "We have no problem with surveys like this, but we have a national, permanently low prices policy, common to all

our stores." A spokesman for Sainsbury's criticised the monitors — picked as "ordinary shoppers from local communities" rather than social scientists — for "not comparing like with like". He said variations in the survey's bills from different Sainsbury's branches included comparisons between own-brand and other goods,

and different types of Christmas turkey.

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Euro deal to cut pollution

Paul Brown Environment Correspondent

POLLUTION from lorries and buses will be cut by 50 per cent in five years following an agreement by European environment ministers in Brussels yesterday.

As part of a deal to reduce air pollution, all new cars will carry compulsory labelling showing fuel consumption and emissions of carbon dioxide.

Ministers' main concern has been to reduce the dust

particles from exhausts, known as particulates, which bring about the premature death of 10,000 people a year in the UK, according to the Department of Health. Particulate traps which remove even the smallest specks of dust will be fitted to all lorries and bus exhausts by 2003, removing all but 10 per cent of pollution from this source.

Michael Meacher, the Environment Minister, said in Brussels: "Slashing the particulate emissions by 50 per cent by 2005 will help people who are particularly sensi-

tive to air pollution — the elderly and those with asthma. The new labelling scheme will give consumers instant access to environmental information on the cars available in the showroom."

Cutting another big pollutant, nitrogen oxide, was also agreed, but this is more difficult. These gases, a contributor to global warming and a constituent of low-level ozone, will be cut by 30 per cent by 2005, but larger reductions might not be possible for another 10 years. Ministers agreed to a review of the problem by 2002.

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Congo conflict engulfs Africa

Deputy foreign editor **Victoria Brittain** reports

FRANCE yesterday evacuated some of her nationals from Congo-Brazzaville as the instability generated by civil war in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) affected yet another central African country, and the UN warned that food shortages were becoming acute in the DRC and Angola.

Two attempts at regional summits last week failed to negotiate an end to the four-month war which now involves troops from seven African countries and has begun to cause severe internal repercussions in both Angola and Zimbabwe.

There was fighting in the streets of the capital of Congo-Brazzaville at the weekend after an incursion of armed men from the neighbouring DRC wrecked the shaky peace which has held since a military power struggle last year.

A widening ring of other African countries have now been drawn into the sidelines Congo war too.

Countries such as Libya, Egypt and Eritrea, are giving open or tacit support to the government of Congo, while others, led by South Africa, are trying desperately to find a compromise to end the most dangerous war the continent has seen since South Africa's apartheid regime tried to gain control of Angola between 1975 and 1990.

A new regional summit will be held in Harare, Zimbabwe, next week, aiming to bring the warring parties to talk.

At the centre of the Congo conflict lies the 1994 genocide in Rwanda which killed nearly a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus and the continuation of the primitive fascism which caused such bloodshed in the heart of Africa.

The protagonists of the genocide, and their allies, are now active in the Congo government's forces, and the new war has also served as a cover for Unita to launch a stunning



Rebel forces defend a bridge spanning the Congo river against Zimbabwean troops supporting the Congolese president, Laurent Kabila

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRENNAN LINSLEY

offensive in Angola from the old bases in Congo which served them during the presidency of Mobutu Sese Seko.

The Congo (then Zaïre) under President Mobutu was the archetype of the old Africa's politics: the rule of the gun, in which the young and uneducated were armed and led by ruthless men bent only on staying in power.

Laurent Kabila's Democratic Republic of Congo is going down the same route — despite starting life on a tide of goodwill after the fall of Mr Mobutu in May 1997. Opposition politicians of every hue have been excluded from a part in the making of the new state and murderous anti-Tutsi rhetoric comes from the head of state himself.

In an extraordinary reversal of alliances in the last five months, tens of thousands of those who perpetrated the 1994 genocide have been retrained as fighting alongside Mr Kabila's soldiers and those of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Chad and Angola. Sudanese troops have also been with

government forces in Congo. The rebels ranged against them are a combination of units which mutilated last August mainly because they felt threatened by President Kabila's increasingly ethnically-based policies, disenfranchised politicians formerly inside the government and a handful of long-exiled intellectuals.

The rebels are backed by the government's former allies, Rwanda and Uganda, fighting for their own survival as Mr Kabila gives a new lease of life to their opponents, who include not only those extremists involved in the genocide, but also dissident Ugandans who were part of Idi Amin's regime in the 1970s.

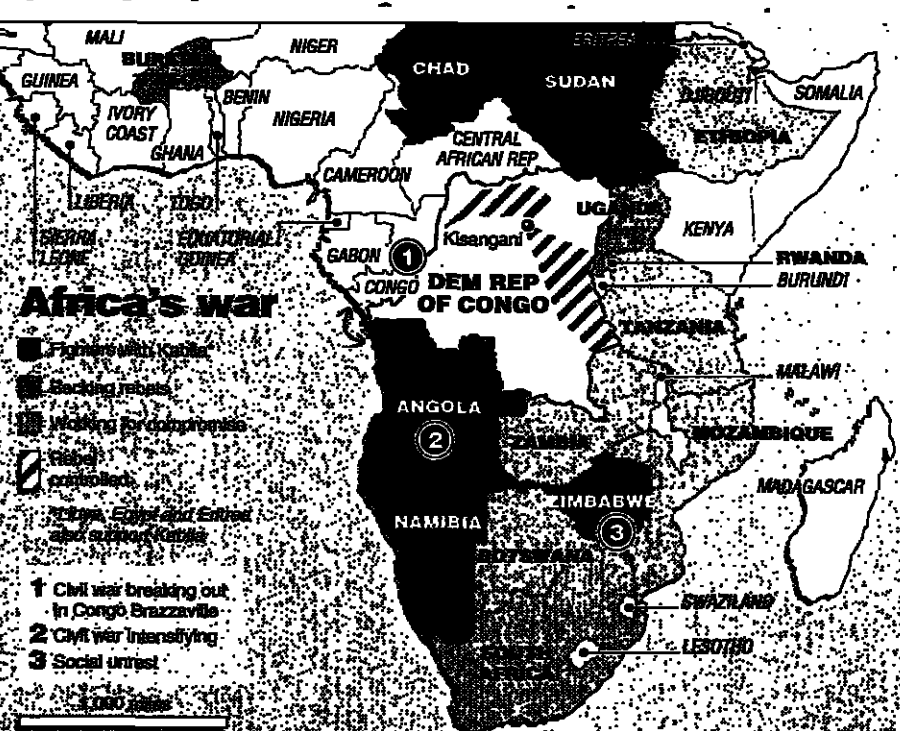
The key players, Mr Kabila and President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, present the extremely complex line-up of interested parties and allies in simple terms: they claim it is an invasion of Congo by Rwanda and Uganda in pursuit of a Tutsi hegemony in the region.

In addition the two men

have also gathered support in some countries, such as Libya, by pointing to US support for the other side.

For the Angolans, the decision to intervene was based on a perceived immediate national interest. They believed that Unita was being aided by the rebels and their allies, Rwanda and Uganda.

Both governments and the rebels have repeatedly denied that charge but have apparently been unable to convince the Angolans, who are now involved in a seriously escalating war at home.



Africa's war

1 Civil war breaking out in Congo-Brazzaville
2 Civil war intensifying
3 Social unrest

Sentences send clear message to dissidents

Beijing has had enough, reports **John Gittings** in Hong Kong

HEAVY sentences were handed out to two Chinese dissidents yesterday after brief trials which appear to have been timed for maximum political effect.

Xu Wenli, a veteran of the democracy movement, was sentenced to 13 years in jail. He remained silent until the verdict, when he said: "This is political persecution."

Mr Xu was found guilty of attempting to overthrow the state by "secretly planning" to set up branches of the Chinese Democratic Party (CDP), founded earlier this year.

His fellow activist Wang Youcai, who was tried last week in Hangzhou on a similar charge, received an 11 year sentence yesterday.

Far from acting in secrecy both dissidents have publicised their efforts to formally register the CDP. A third colleague, Qin Yongmin, was tried last week and is awaiting the verdict.

Mr Xu was active in the 1979-81 Democracy Wall move-

ment in Beijing and helped launch an unofficial magazine. Mr Wang was a student leader in Tiananmen Square in 1989, and was jailed for "inciting subversion".

Human rights observers believe that the Chinese leadership is determined to quell all forms of organised political dissent before next year — the 10th anniversary of the Beijing massacre.

On Friday President Jiang Zemin stated in uncompromising language the Communist Party's intention to maintain one-party rule. The former leader Li Peng — who declared martial law in 1989 — has ruled out any further democratisation beyond village elections.

It is hard to recognise in Mr Jiang the "man of vision" to whom Bill Clinton paid tribute after visiting Beijing in the summer. Last night the United States embassy in Beijing described the verdicts as "despicable" and said no individual should be convicted for pursuing universally recognised freedoms. The British



Supporters of Xu Wenli hold up his portrait during a protest outside the government headquarters in Hong Kong yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOBBY YIP

Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett said he was shocked by the speed of the trials and severity of the sentences.

Mr Xu is one of China's most remarkable dissidents. His spiky character has survived years of hard struggle.

On his last appearance in court in 1981, he shocked the judge by objecting to his pres-

ence in court. In 1985 the treatment he received worsened after he smuggled out an essay describing the farcical nature of his trial and the hardships of prison life. Mr Xu was moved to a tiny windowless cell where he spent three and a half years.

On his release in 1993, he protested his innocence, saying that he had acted for the sake of his country and that his opinions would never change.

In 1996, after his "political rights" were formally restored to him, he openly resumed his activities. He suffered continual harassment, but continued to talk to the foreign press, mobilise dissidents in China,

and work on a common strategy.

He has refused to leave China, saying that the democracy movement must rely on people who are willing to make sacrifices "without complaints or regrets". Last year he criticised another dissident, Wei Jingsheng — himself a veteran of the Democracy

Wall movement — who went into exile in the US.

Yesterday Mr Xu, now aged 55, faced the court in defiant silence after being given less than four days to prepare a defence. He said he had no intention of appealing.

Mr Xu and Mr Wang were also accused of accepting money from abroad, although

'I committed no crime. What I did, I did for my country. There is a pop song called I'm Still the Same Old Me. I think that best expresses my meaning'

Xu Wenli after leaving prison in 1993

'All Xu wanted to do was advocate free speech and ensure the Chinese Democratic Party registers peacefully. But the government failed this test, and my father has to go to jail'

Xu's daughter, Xu Jin, outside the court yesterday

that is not an offence. Both courts were reported by the official Chinese news agency to have said that the two should be severely punished because they were repeat offenders. The report indicates a high-level policy decision to signal to other dissidents that their activities will no longer be tolerated.

Russia calls for three-way pact

M. R. Narayan Swamy in New Delhi

THE Russian prime minister, Yevgeny Primakov, yesterday called for a "strategic triangle" involving India, China and Russia to establish regional stability.

"A lot depends on the policy pursued by India, China and Russia," Mr Primakov said after he was welcomed by the Indian prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, at the start of his two-day visit to New Delhi.

Mr Primakov said a "strategic partnership" with China, and strong ties with India, founded on decades of military co-operation since the 1960s, when New Delhi's relations with Beijing warmed.

Sino-Indian relations were strained earlier this year

when China came out strongly against India's nuclear weapon tests in May.

The Indian defence minister, George Fernandez, described Beijing as New Delhi's main threat.

Mr Primakov arrived in the Indian capital late on Sunday for a visit aimed at providing long-term guidelines for political, military and economic ties. Yesterday he held talks with India's president, K. R. Narayanan, and later met the Hindu nationalist prime minister.

The talks with Mr Vajpayee were to be followed by the signing of seven agreements, including a 10-year military-technical co-operation pact allowing for continued Indian purchases of Russian military hardware.

The former Soviet Union

was India's main arms supplier, and by the early 1990s accounted for 70 per cent of the Indian army's weapons systems. The 10-year accord renews an existing pact which expires at the end of this month.

Mr Primakov reiterated Russia's strong denunciation of the United States and British air strikes on Iraq, which have also been condemned by India.

"We will never change our position on Iraq," he said.

"We are very negative about the use of force bypassing the United Nations Security Council."

He voiced concern that the cessation of US and British air strikes on Baghdad was "only temporary".

Mr Primakov is the first head of government from one

of the five permanent members of the Security Council to visit India since the May nuclear tests. He is standing in for President Boris Yeltsin, who called off his trip earlier this month because of illness.

In his comments to reporters, Mr Primakov made no reference to the nuclear tests, but he described New Delhi as "a great power" and said: "Our relations are strong, based on mutual interest."

Officials said Mr Primakov's talks with leaders in New Delhi would include Russian and Indian concern about the rising Islamic influence in the region, and the spread of extremism from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan to Central Asia.



Russia's prime minister, Yevgeny Primakov, meets India's president, K. R. Narayanan, yesterday

Four killed as toxic waste panic sparks exodus in Cambodia

AP in Sihanoukville

FOUR people were killed in accidents yesterday as up to 1,000 fled a Cambodian port fearing exposure to suspected toxic waste.

Public transport out of Sihanoukville was packed. Police said at least seven accidents had been reported on the bumpy narrow road north from the city.

Kim Bun Sath, the local police commissioner, confirmed that four people had been killed and at least 13 injured in the exodus.

Prince Norodom Ranariddh, the president of the national assembly said that he had been told that a bribe had been paid to officials to allow the waste, from Taiwan, to be dumped in Cambodia.

Among those leaving Sihanoukville were customs officials blamed by protesters for letting the waste into the country, and their families.

Since the dump was found by environment ministry investigators a week ago, reports that the waste might be toxic have caused tension.

The boiling point was reached with the mysterious death of a port worker who is said to have cleaned the hold of the ship that brought the waste from Taiwan.

The Taiwanese company which sent the waste has denied that the material is toxic, but has admitted that it does contain traces of mercury, which is highly poisonous in large doses.

Vote forces Netanyahu to hold early elections

Menahem Begin in Jerusalem

THE Israeli parliament last night voted to hold elections within six months, granting a temporary reprieve for the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, but imposing further delays on the Middle East peace process.

The 120-member Knesset voted by a majority of 81 to hold elections within six months instead of at the end of 2000. Thirty members voted against, and there were four abstentions. Not all members of Mr Netanyahu's Likud party heeded his appeal to vote in favour of the bill, which was proposed by his left-wing opponents.

Israeli legislators haven't yet picked a date for the new elections, but Mr Netanyahu is expected to freeze peace-making measures with the Palestinians as he prepares to fight for his political career.

Mr Netanyahu suggested that by unseating him, Israelis would be doing the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, a favour. "I promise you that Arafat is the first person who thinks any alternative is better than Netanyahu. The whole world understands this," he said.

The Labour party leader, Ehud Barak, said: "Millions of citizens are depending on us to topple this government and advance the peace process."

The vote reflected the prime minister's inability to keep his coalition intact while continuing to implement the Wye River Accord he signed with the Palestinians two months ago.

If he is to convince his hard-line supporters that he is taking a tough stand in negotiations, the prime minister's strategist says he cannot afford to look the least bit soft on Israeli security, or show willingness to cede more territory to the Palestinians.

Natan Sharansky, the industry and trade minister, said it would not be possible for the government to decide on issues affecting the country's future while its leaders are immersed in what promises to be one of the most heated election campaigns in history.

By the end of May, Israel and the Palestinians were supposed to have resolved the key issues of their dispute, such as the future status of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements in the West Bank, and fate of Palestinian refugees.

"I think that if Arafat keeps his commitments, I see no reason we shouldn't keep ours," said Mr Sharansky, who was involved in the negotiations in Wye River, Maryland.

"But to get into final status talks, it would be very difficult to do that in the atmosphere of elections, while the Right and the Left are attacking each other," he said.

The hiatus in peace-making may seem understandable to Israelis who would like to unify their positions as they head into the crucial phase of



Netanyahu talks to Shaul Yahalom, one of his coalition partners, as the country headed towards early elections

PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREEMAN

'Arafat is the first person who thinks anyone is better than Netanyahu'

tory approach towards Arab-Israeli reconciliation.

Palestinian leaders, however, rejected the notion that they should accept a freezing of the Wye Accord, insisting that the agreement must not

be held hostage to Israeli domestic politics.

Mr Arafat realises that he stands to gain by seeing the Netanyahu government replaced with one more in tune with the Labour party government with which he first reached a peace deal in 1993, and reportedly tried to stall the peace process for a time in the hopes that a more conciliatory regime would take over in Israel.

But that will be little to cool the anger of ordinary Palestinians, who have clashed with Israeli soldiers in recent weeks because fewer prisoners than they expected were released from Israeli jails.

Analysts say violence in the

territories could flare up while Israel prepares for elections and leaves the peace process on hold.

In turn, that and any acts of terrorism by Muslim fundamentalist groups, will likely be tools in Mr Netanyahu's war chest because they will allow him to campaign on the platform that Mr Arafat has still not done enough to curb extremists.

The vote to hold new elections was also set to shake up the political landscape, breaking up old parties and forming new ones. Several members of the Likud party said they were considering challenging Mr Netanyahu for the leadership of the right, either by trying to wrest away his position

as party chairman, or by forming a new nationalist party led by Benny Begin, son of the late peacemaker Menachem Begin.

'Millions of citizens are depending on us to topple this government'

Small, middle-of-the-road parties such as the Third Way led by Shimon Peres, who is running on his own and hurting his chances of topping him, Eli Goldschmidt, a Labour party Knesset member, said.

Shahak, a former army general who is popular with voters.

Pressure has been mounting on Mr Lipkin-Shahak to join forces with the Labour party, as peace proponents believe his candidacy could compete with that of the Labour party chairman, Ehud Barak, splitting the left-wing vote and serving Mr Netanyahu an election victory.

"I am very sad that Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, instead of joining [Labour] and increasing the chance of defeating Netanyahu, is running on his own and hurting our chances of topping him," Eli Goldschmidt, a Labour party Knesset member, said.

Tehran puts its faith in teen warriors

Geneive Abdo reports on the clash of two cultures among the young in Iran

TEENAGERS climb the steep Kolakchal Hill in north Tehran each weekend wearing black leather jackets and open-toe platform shoes, and carrying knapsacks stuffed with personal tape players. They are openly flouting the rules: the girls wear caked make-up, and the boys play noisy pop music.

They used to walk up the hill in Jamsheed Park without fear, but nowadays the talk at the bottom is of "the basij" and whether they are at the top checking bags.

The basij are Iran's young morality police; along with the Revolutionary Guards, they are the guardians of the Islamic Republic.

In recent days they have increased their presence in the congested teenage hangouts.

The basij, and their conservative backers in the government, are worried that they are being ignored as youngsters become ever bolder about having fun.

Concern at the basij's waning influence prompted the conservative Speaker of the national parliament, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, to push through a law giving the militia legal status 19 years after it was founded by the late Ayatollah Khomeini.

Now, for the first time, the student basij groups in the universities will receive funding and get official state sanction. There are also incentives on offer: all boys attending basij courses at school will get reduced military service.

"The best place for the enemies are the universities, where there are young people with immature thoughts and emotions," Mr Nateq-Nouri said when endorsing the new law.

The commander of the Revolutionary Guards, Major-General Yahya Rahim Safavi, has announced that 500,000 of the basij's members are to take part in the militia's largest-ever manoeuvres. He added that the survival of the basij and the Islamic Republic were linked.

The young boys and girls who make up the basij, which is said to have 5 million members, look very different to their Western-influenced peers. In contrast to the boys with greased hair, tight blue jeans and pierced ears, the basij wear army fatigues and many grow straggly beards as a symbol of their religious devotion. The former listen to Pink Floyd

songs recently translated into Persian, while the basij speak in slogans, echoing the political rhetoric they hear on television.

Founded as a people's army by Khomeini in 1980, just before the Iran-Iraq war, the basij have been a visible presence ever since. When the war ended in 1988, they turned their attention to the Islamic cause at home.

Along with the Revolutionary Guards, they imposed a strict moral code, establishing a reign of terror among young Iranians. They arrested teenagers travelling in cars in mixed company, and broke up mixed wedding parties and those where alcohol was served, sometimes detaining the guests and the parents of the bride and groom. The punishment usually included a hefty fine and several lashes at special detention centres.

Today there are reports that the basij in Tehran are more interested in demanding bribes than enforcing the law when they stop cars. Even the Revolutionary Guards have been accused

'The best place for our enemies is the universities, where the young are'

of breaking up parties held by the rich and imposing heavy fines.

But the cadre of basij searching bags and scrutinising the attire of the teenagers in Jamsheed Park emphasised their high moral purpose.

"Young people don't know what they are doing. They are under cultural attack by Western governments importing their corruption into Iran," 18-year-old Ali Honarmand said, his gaze fixed on the ground to avoid eye contact with a woman.

Mr Honarmand works as a basij when not studying at Tehran's Islamic Scientific Centre, an institute for aspiring clerics and ayatollahs. He hopes to become a cleric, to make sure of his place in the afterlife.

"I want to show the goodness of Islam to the world," he said. "I don't want to be a puppet for the superpowers."

At Tehran University the basij hope the new law will enhance their prestige on campus, even though they say they already have tens of thousands of members there.

Basij leaders say they will use the new funding to fight the cultural invasion. At their headquarters at the university, Mohammed Daghani said: "The university is the cultural battleground."

Peru enforced sterilisation of poor women

Adela Gooch in Madrid and Jane Diaz Limaco in Lima

THOUSANDS of poor Peruvian women have been forced to undergo sterilisation as part of a government programme to lower the country's birth rate.

Details of the campaign, which has led to 250,000 women being sterilised in the past three years, were revealed yesterday in the Spanish daily El Pais.

The newspaper published an early draft of a report by the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for Human Rights (Cladem), which is to be released in February.

It alleges that as part of a wider population control campaign to lower the birth rate to 2.5 children per woman the Peruvian government "established targets at national level for the use of surgical methods of birth control".

The Peruvian government's reaction to charges that the health ministry's sterilisation drive used coercion and deceit to sterilise women has been one of "total indifference", opposition MPs say.

Arturo Salazar, MP for the tiny Renovación group, said that the health minister, Marino Costa Bauer, had persistently refused to answer questions on the subject since reports of abuse surfaced a year ago. No government official has been sacked in connection with the allegations.

Cladem says the sterilisations were achieved by pressuring medical staff to meet quotas, and rewarding those who achieved high targets.

Peruvian officials told Cladem that the target rose

from 100,000 sterilisations in 1996 to 130,000 in 1997 and 165,000 this year. The total number of sterilisations in 1996 was 81,761, according to medical sources. In 1997 the full 130,000 target was met, but this year the number of operations dropped to 43,000 as criticism of the programme grew.

In April Peru's Medical College recommended suspending the operations for 90 days, not so much on grounds of conscience but so as to ensure that they were carried out in sanitary conditions," the report's author, Giulia Tamayo, a human rights lawyer, told El Pais.

"The health department drew up a list of hospitals that met basic requirements but the real reason for dropping sterilisations is the information provided by the press."

Ms Tamayo first became aware of the programme when she was visiting a health clinic in 1996 and saw documents showing sterilisation targets.

The Peruvian state ombudsman alerted journalists after receiving reports last year of the methods used to persuade women to be sterilised and of operations that had gone wrong.

Some women were offered money if they agreed to be sterilised: 100 soles (about \$20) or food. Others were told they could become ill if they refused. Many were pressured to undergo sterilisation while they were in hospital being treated for other illnesses.

Earlier this year Peruvian doctors and other medical staff admitted to a member of the United States congressional sub-committee on human rights, Joseph Roes, that the quota system existed.

News in brief

Octuplets critical

THE world's only surviving octuplets were in a critical condition in a Texas hospital last night. The six girls and two boys were being monitored on a "minute-to-minute basis" in the neonatal intensive care unit at Texas Children's Hospital.

"It's really too early to say [what the prognosis is]... they are all critically ill. Several have shown some improvement and several haven't," said a hospital spokesman. Statistically, the babies had an 86 per cent chance of survival and a 75 to 80 per cent chance of developing normally.

One of the girls was born 12 weeks premature on December 8. The other seven were delivered by caesarean section on Sunday — Reuters, Houston.

Nude protest women held

POLICE in Guinea's capital, Conakry, arrested 21 women protesting in the nude yesterday against the detention of opposition presidential candidate Alpha Conde, the security ministry said.

Locals claimed police fired tear-gas to disperse the women — Reuters, Conakry.

No murder charges

DANISH prosecutors yesterday dropped murder charges brought against a nurse in connection with the death of 23 patients at a home for the elderly, but left open the possibility that she could be tried on other charges.

The nurse was charged in October 1997, shocking a

country that prides itself on its extensive social services and good medical care. At the time, police said the nurse was also suspected of embezzling \$26,000 from the victims.

They died after being given doses of a morphine-based drug at the home in central Copenhagen. — AP, Copenhagen.

Stalin draws crowds

SEVERAL hundred Russian Communists marched to Red Square in Moscow yesterday to lay carnations at the Kremlin wall tomb of Stalin on the 119th anniversary of his birth.

The solemn scene underscored the extent to which the question of Stalin's legacy still divides Russians seven years after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Many people, especially the elderly still recall with fondness the days when Russia was a superpower, and credit Stalin with leading the country to victory in the second world war. — Reuters, Moscow.

ANC accuses rivals of arson

OFFICIALS of the African National Congress yesterday blamed political rivals for the burning of 16 houses belonging to supporters in the southern Indian Ocean coastal area of Izingolweni.

Police arrested four suspects and are investigating the alleged arson, which occurred on Sunday afternoon, said Police Superintendent Dawood Kader.

The ANC said the houses belonged to families who had been threatened by Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party supporters. — AP, Izingolweni.

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Sidney Pollard

Labour and learning

FEW of his generation, anywhere in the world, have equalled the range or excellence of the writings of the economic historian Sidney Pollard, who has died of a heart attack aged 73. His was an extraordinarily productive life of teaching, research and publication. It was his range that was so remarkable. His first major book, in the early 1950s, was the history of industrial labour in Sheffield. In the next four decades he wrote on early English socialism, labour history, the co-operative movement, the processes of early industrialisation, problems of capital accumulation, a sophisticated narrative of the British economy in the 20th century and a series of texts on European industrial development. He was especially interested in the relative economic decline of Britain within the world economy.

Among many works on early industrialisation in Britain, Pollard's *Genesis Of Modern Management* (1955) is judged by many to be the most stimulating single text, and its analysis ranges much wider than its title suggests. Pollard spent most of his academic life, certainly until 1990, at Sheffield University. Through the following decade he taught at Bielefeld, in West Germany, returning to Sheffield after his 1990 retirement. He was one of the Central European Jewish emigrants who arrived in Britain in the 1930s and made such a powerful contribution to British intellectual life.



An undogmatic Marxist, he was never a member of a left group or movement

Pollard was born Siegfried Pollak in Vienna, the second son of Moses Pollak and Leontine Katz. His teenage life dramatically changed in 1938 after the Germans marched into Austria, and later that year he left Vienna in a party of children who had been accepted as political refugees in Britain. The £100 that was required, per child, was provided in Sydney's case by an Edinburgh Jewish committee. It is a grim reminder of how many more could have been saved. His parents remained in Vienna, to be destroyed by the Holocaust in an unknown place and time.

The young Pollard, who had shown exceptional promise and was already an imagin-

ative violinist, had a mixed existence during his first five years in Britain. After reception camps in East Anglia, he moved to Whittingham Farm School in Scotland, where he received no formal education but learned to speak English with a Scottish accent. He then moved around, worked in various manual jobs, and on his own initiative took correspondence courses and passed the London matriculation and intermediate examinations. In 1943, at the age of 18, he volunteered for the Army — and changed himself into Sidney Pollard. He ended his military career as an interpreter in Germany, and was demobilised in early 1947 with the rank of corporal. The

professor when it was just beginning to be possible in England's provincial universities to develop a serious post-graduate school in the humanities, and especially the social sciences. He did this at Sheffield with great energy and sense. He was a good tutor and research supervisor. Always helpful, he would listen carefully, and his own rigorous standards were the touchstone for his advice and judgments.

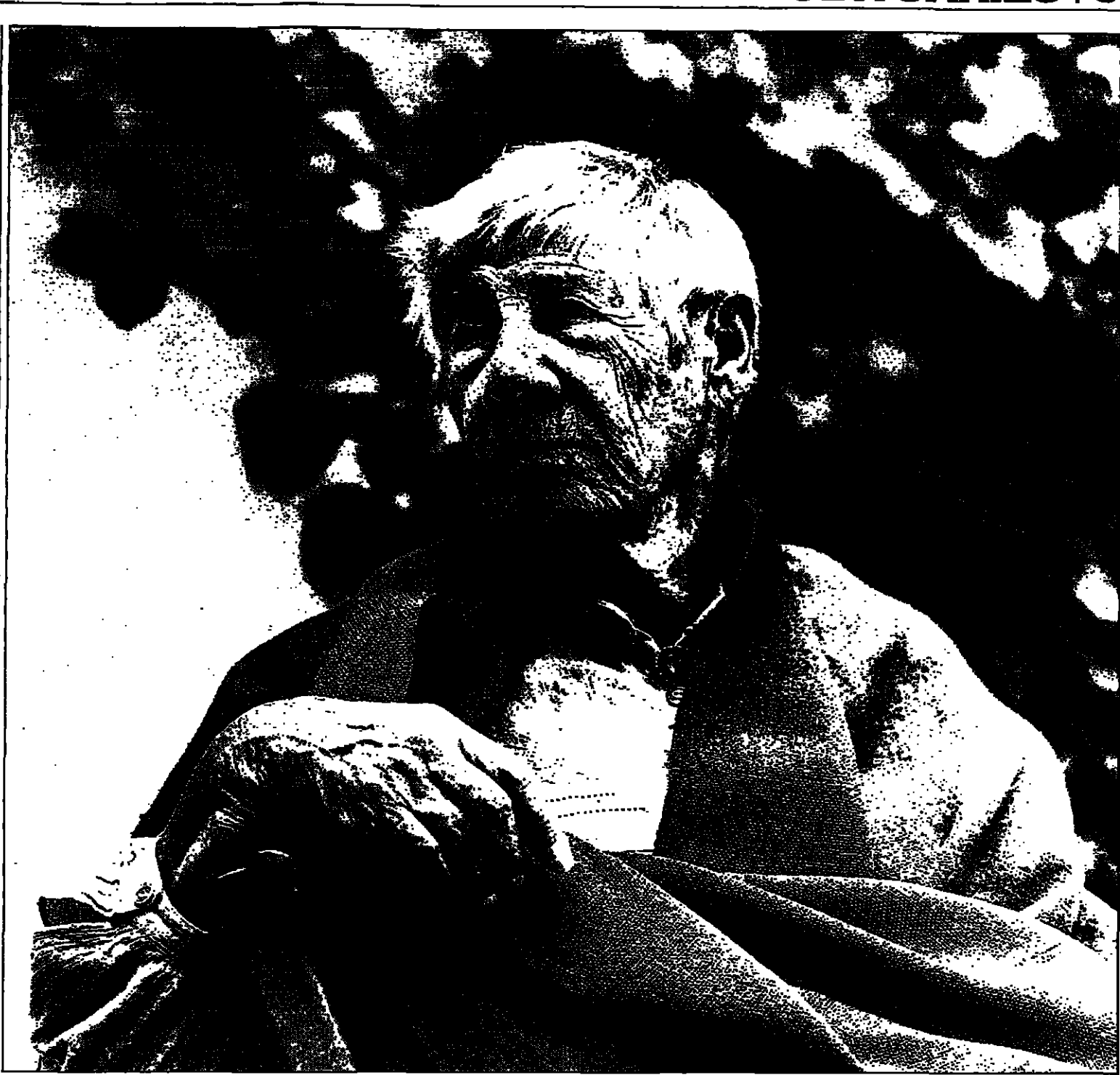
Pollard lectured worldwide. His visits included journeys to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, Israel, and Australia. In 1971 he accepted an offer from the University of California at Berkeley and resigned from Sheffield. But the US immigration service was only prepared to issue him with a temporary work permit. Among the reasons cited for this decision was Pollard's six-month student membership of the Communist Party and two visits to the GDR, where he was on friendly terms with Jürgen Kuczynski, one of East Germany's leading intellectuals.

Berkeley insisted that the matter could be remedied but Sidney had a family and he felt their future had to be protected. He asked Sheffield to rescind his resignation. It was a decision that affected Sidney greatly and he found his disappointment difficult to overcome.

Then, in 1980, he took a professorship at Bielefeld. His decision, which dismayed his colleagues, was based upon a mixture of academic and personal reasons. His marriage had been dissolved and in 1982 he married Helen Trippett. Back in Sheffield in 1990 the history department nominated him as an honorary research fellow — the British Academy had made him a corresponding fellow in 1989.

Pollard was a helpful, affectionate father and grandfather. His life with Helen gave them both fulfilment and love. He is survived by two sons, a daughter, and his wife. The academy has lost a bright star.

John Saville
Sidney Pollard, historian, born April 21, 1925; died November 22, 1998



Lewis... her novels and poetry spoke of authority as experienced by often powerless individuals such as women

Janet Lewis

Quiet voices of the earth and sky

THE critic Evan S. Connell wrote of Janet Lewis, who has died aged 93, that he could not think of another writer "whose stature so far exceeds her public recognition". Such recognition as she received came mainly from her six works of prose fiction. She also wrote poetry, children's stories, verse translations and opera librettos.

Her poems, the best of which rival her marvelous prose, were the constant factor in her creative life. She began writing them as a girl, had her first poems in the great Chicago magazine, *Poetry*, when she was 21, and was still writing notable verse in her mid-nineties. She was born near Chicago, and her father, Edwin Herbert Lewis, was a poet, novelist and scholar, who encouraged her young talent. The family spent their summer holidays on the island of Long Beach, in northern Michigan, just on the Canadian border and not far from the Great Lakes. The landscape affected her deeply and stayed with her, but still more important were her contacts with people of Native American stock. The Lewis befriended a family named Johnston, whose European ancestors had emigrated from Ireland in the 18th century and whose more recent forebears were of the Ojibwa tribe.

The family saga the Johnstons told was to provide the foundation for Lewis's most ambitious work of fiction, *The Ojibwa* (1982). This epic novel, which covers a period from the mid-18th century to the end of the 19th, is a book of some historical importance. At a time when the triumph of the white man was still celebrated, it lamented the destruction of the Ojibwa culture and outlook. It also recorded, very movingly, the sometimes fer-

ocious attempts of different nations — Ojibwa, British, French and American — to share the country peacefully. But before the 1930s Lewis's main preoccupation was poetry. At the University of Chicago, where she majored in French, she joined the poetry club, through which she met her future husband, the poet and critic Ivor Winters. She spent two years in Paris and, on returning in 1927, published her first collection of poetry, *The Indians In The Woods*. But by this time she was gravely ill with tuberculosis. Five years in a New Mexico sanatorium, for three of which she was confined to bed, provided new quality of learning. They initiated a lasting passion for New Mexico's Pueblo culture, taught her patience, and instilled a sense of the frailty of human life.

When one met her, one was struck by her tranquillity, and something of the same quality is present in her writings. Winters also suffered from TB and their common suffering seems to have drawn them together. They married on her recovery in 1927 and, when Winters began his graduate work at Stanford University, settled in California. They acquired a small, timber-frame house in Los Altos, near Palo Alto, which remained Lewis's home until her death.

A small plot of land came with it and they turned this to practical use, planting fruit-trees and keeping goats. They had a separate study built in the garden, a little block of quietness with a vine trailing over it. When Lewis visited Lewis in 1966, it was shown round the garden before we entered the house. She offered me fruit from each of the trees: guavas and kumquats, pomegranates and grapes. She also encouraged me to spend an afternoon in the study among her husband's books and pictures. A typewriter on the desk

announced that the room still functioned as a cave of making. The couple now began a family and Winters acquired tenure in his faculty. Both of them were writing poems, both moving away from the imagist free-verse manner of their early work towards a more formal, meditative kind of writing. Lewis's manner, though, was always looser than Winters's. He, moreover, tended to see the poem as a human artefact set against nature. For her the two were more closely related: "in our lives," she wrote, "we are 'tangled with earth'".

There was also a public dimension to their lives. During the Depression they supported President Roosevelt and worked in the anti-racist movement. Then, in 1933, the public world came quite sud-

denly much closer. A colleague was falsely accused of murdering his wife. Other colleagues, who ought to have known better, accepted the charge without question, but Lewis and Winters campaigned for his acquittal. They were successful, but the incident taught Lewis something about the precariousness of justice and the moral frailty of human beings, especially where the public world is concerned. This led her to read an anonymous book called *Famous Cases Of Circumstantial Evidence* (1873), which provided her

with the subjects and plots for three of her novels: *The Wife Of Martin Guerre* (1941) — her best-known book and surely a masterpiece — *The Trial Of Søren Kierkegaard* (1947) and *The Ghost Of Monsieur Scarron* (1959). All are historical, European in setting and domestic, though all have political reverberations. Each of them, as Donald Davie has said, "is a fable about authority". This is so, but it is authority as experienced by individuals, often powerless individuals such as women, and though all three tend to emphasise the need for authority as the one foundation of peace and justice, they also expose it as a rough instrument. When the wife of Martin Guerre rejects her husband as an impostor, she is rejecting a man who has made her happier than ever her real husband did.

Lewis also wrote two books with modern settings: *Against A Darkening Sky* (1943) about California, and a collection of short fictions, *Goodbye, Son, And Other Stories* (1946). In all the novels, the prose is of stunning beauty without ever trying hard to be "poetic". The account of human feelings is impressively moving, but what holds the reader is Lewis's sense of the physical world, the objective things her characters move among. It is perhaps this objectivity and her preference for meditation rather than drama — broadly speaking, the quietness of her tone — that has kept Janet Lewis out of the news. This is not to say that she is old-fashioned, though she prefers a simple, first-person narrative to the complexities of modernist technique. But the economy of her style, in particular her use of what Ezra Pound called "the luminous detail", establishes her as a wholly modern writer. The death of her husband in 1968 led to a silence in

Lewis of almost 10 years. Then, quite unexpectedly, she began writing librettos for operas, six of them, some based on her own novels, others on such classics as *The Last Of The Mohicans*, predictably one of her favourite novels. Poetry returned as well. *Poems Old And New* appeared in 1981, and a collection, *The Dear First*, as recently as 1994. Many of the later poems show Lewis in her eighties stepping clear of her husband's powerful influence. Most of them are in a flexible free verse, in contrast to the tensely experimental pieces from 1932. It was a modest but remarkable late flowering.

Janet Lewis had a talent for friendship with people younger than herself, and her house was always open to visitors, especially those who cared for her work, or that of her husband, to whose memory she was fiercely loyal. She leaves a daughter, a son and three grandchildren.

Clive Wilmer

Janet Lewis, novelist and poet, born August 17 1899; died December 1, 1998

Death Notices

BOWMAN (née Barrington), Lizzie, widow of John Bowman, died peacefully at home on December 19, aged 88, possibly at home in the sleep. Beloved husband of 62 years. Survived by three sons, John, Robert and William, and four daughters, Elizabeth, Mary, Audrey, and Margaret. Family funeral service at St. Augustine's Church, Richmond Rd., Cambridge on Wednesday, 23rd December 1998, at 12 noon. Family flowers only please. Enquiries to F. G. & M. Funeral Services, 01634 282025.

GRIMWOOD, Robert M.B.E., on December 19th passed away in hospital, having aged 64 years (formerly of Chesham Road, Essex). Most dearly loved husband of Nancy, father of three sons, Robert, John, and David, and a daughter, Margaret. All enquiries to Mrs. Margaret and Martin Funeral Directors (01242 682021).

MATTHEW, Colonel Sir William Leslie, K.C., D.S.O., M.C., M.B.E., D.L., K.C.M.G., died on December 19th, aged 88, possibly at home in the sleep. Beloved husband of Eleanor, close friend of Gillian, Jennifer, William and Peter, and proud grandfather and great grandfather. Family funeral service at 12 noon today, December 22nd. Memorial service to be held on December 27th. Donations to the British Red Cross Society, 100 Victoria Street, London W1A 0AB.

MORRIS-MILLER, Hannah, born in Vienna on 26th February 1936, died peacefully in London after a short illness on December 17th. Daughter of one of the first British women to work in the film industry, leaving with a long and varied career in the film and television industry. She will be greatly missed by those who knew and loved her. Her funeral will be held at 12 noon on Saturday, December 19th, at the New Church, 100 Victoria Street, London W1A 0AB. For information 0181 222 0008.

READ, Harold John, aged 73 years, former Head of Art at Abertree High School, Wrexham, died on December 19th, after a long illness. He was a devoted husband and father, and a loving grandfather. He will be sorely missed by his family and friends. The funeral will be held at 12 noon on Saturday, December 19th, at the New Church, 100 Victoria Street, London W1A 0AB. For information 0181 222 0008.

Norman Fell

America's nosy landlord

BRITISH audiences may recognise the face from countless movies and TV drama since the 1960s, but few would be able to put a name to it. For Americans, however, the name is familiar. Stanley Roper, the actor supporting actor who has died of cancer aged 74, was a household name in more senses than one. Fell's fame was mainly due to his role of the irritable, nosy landlord, Stanley Roper, in the vasty popular TV sitcom, *Three's Company* and its spin-off, *The Ropers*.

Three's Company, adapted from the British sitcom *Man About The House*, had Stanley married to sex-starlet Helen (Andrea Lindley), the American counterparts of George and Mildred Roper. The series concerned the antics of three swinging young tenants, two women and a man sharing an apartment. In order for this arrangement to be accepted, they inform Stanley that Jack (John Ritter) is gay. Each episode, therefore, was rooted in a misunderstanding with Stanley making a limp-wristed gesture while calling Jack a "bairy" or "tinkerbell".

In one episode, Stanley is shocked to wake up next to Jack after a wild party, and thinks he and Jack... well, you know! (Canned laughter). One of the show's regular gags was Stanley mistakenly thinking he has got the better of someone, and smiling smugly at the camera. "Stanley, don't smile, it makes you look simple-minded," his wife tells him. (More canned laughter).

This rather cheeky and homophobic sitcom, which ran for seven years from 1977, was redeemed by Fell's genuinely funny performance. He had waited more than 25 years in the business for recognition since he took up acting in New York after serving in the Pacific during the war. In fact, most of his early work was on television, notably in the first production of *Twelve Angry Men* in 1954.

In Hollywood from 1958, Fell got many small roles in big movies, his droll, sad features making an instant impression as radio announcers, cops and soldiers. Gradually, the roles grew in relative importance, such as Dustin Hoffman's suspicious landlord in *The Graduate*

(1967); a key military witness for suspected traitor Lee Marvin in *Sergeant Ryker* (1968); a soldier buddy of Paul Newman in *The Secret War Of Harry Frigg* (1969); one of the party of American tourists in *Visiting Seven Countries in 18 Days In If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium* (1969); a detective on hitman Charles Bronson's trail in *The Stone Killer* (1973), and the doctor who informs Burt Reynolds that he has only a short time to live in *The End* (1978).

Fell was also very active on television in series such as *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Streets Of San Francisco*, *Perry Mason* and *Murder, She Wrote*. His later feature films, one of which was called *Stinky* (*Stinky* (1980)), and his last, *The Destiny Of Marty Fine* (1986), were of dubious merit. But Norman Fell, who is survived by two daughters, would always be recognised wherever he went in the United States as Stanley Roper.

Ronald Bergan
Norman Fell, actor, born March 24, 1925; died December 14, 1998

A Country Diary

NEW ZEALAND: After breaking away from the ancient super-continent of Gondwanaland, the islands we now know as New Zealand spent 80 million years in total isolation, their flora and fauna allowed to evolve free from outside influence. The history is full of descriptions of strange flightless birds, huge

ancient trees and large insects found nowhere else in the world. Then man arrived — the Maori followed by Europeans, and with them came the predators that were to cause such devastation to this astonishing diversity of wildlife, their dogs, cats, rats, stoats and weasels amongst the most destructive. So now, when

arriving at Auckland, the first signs of wildlife are likely to be relatives of the birds you have just left behind — black-birds, sparrows, thrushes, greenfinches and chaffinches, all introduced by those early pioneers to remind them of home. But away from the urban spread this is still a land of vast open spaces and towering ancient forests, where unique wildlife can be seen by the diligent naturalist.

JM THOMPSON

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

THE TORNADO pilot shown on page 2 yesterday was not displaying the Iraq campaign's Desert Fox insignia. He was displaying the time-honoured insignia of 12 Squadron, Royal Air Force, introduced when it was equipped with the Fairley Fox in 1928.

PER LINDSTRAND, one of the co-pilots of Richard Branson, in his attempt to circumnavigate the world in a balloon, page 13, December 19, is Swedish not Norwegian.

IN OUR Review of the year, in Guardian Weekend, December 19, we appeared to attribute *The Iceman Cometh* to Tennessee Williams, instead of its rightful author, Eugene O'Neill.

Birthdays

Lady (Mary) Archer, scientist, 54; James Burke, broadcaster, 62; Robin Corbett, Labour MP, 68; Noel Edmonds, broadcaster, 50; Mike Molloy, former editor, Daily Mirror, 58; The Duke of Westminster, chancellor, Manchester Metropolitan University, 47; Ken Whitmore, playwright, 58; Joe Lee Wilson, blues singer, 63; Six Peregrine Worsthouse, journalist, 75.

Memorial Services

ESMAEL, Epimaco, a memorial occasion to commemorate the life and work of Epimaco Esmael will be held in Westminster College Chapel, on Saturday, 23rd January 1999, starting in the Holywell Music Room at 2.30pm.

Marriages

HYDEMANHACKETT, On Friday, December 19th, Michael Hydemann married Mary Hackett at the Leeds Registry Office. Celebrations at a later date.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 735 4567 or by 0171 735 4707 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.



Fell... meeting about in boats with Phil Silvers in The Boatniks

Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

THE Prime Minister's seasonal generosity knows no bounds. Mr Tony cares, you see, (if it's possible, he cares too much), which is why he is sending thousands of signed Christmas cards to party members. One constituency organiser in the West Midlands, who must distribute about 200, reports an amazing coincidence: every single one is to a member whose subscription has lapsed. "When your team deliver the cards," writes Carol Linforth of Millbank in the accompanying letter, "it is important that they knock on the door and thank them for the continued membership of the party..." Those who have paid up get so all... but as Mr Tony might point out, there is sound precedent for this approach in the New Testament. The parable of the Prodigal Son is one example. Another is the observation that "there shall be more rejoicing in Millbank over one sinner that repenteth than for 99 loyal drones who cough up their dues on time".

IN one of 1998's more perplexing upsets, William Hague has won a Man of the Year award. In a poll on Teletext, he won 39 per cent of the vote, with Mr Tony second on 25 per cent. As media outlets go, Teletext may not be the most glamorous or prestigious, but at least it would seem to be the easiest to fix. Hats off Central Office.

A RACIST outburst from an unlikely quarter reaches our attention. Black newspaper New Nation reports how its news editor Ross Slater rang the maverick black broadcaster Dariusz Howe about his perplexing performance on a discussion show concerning teenage gang rapes (Mr Howe grabbed his crotch, and stated: "West Indian children are taught from the age of ten to be sexy"). "Are you a black boy?" asked Mr Howe, apparently taking umbrage when informed that Mr Slater is white. "Why don't you go and fuck a dog?" he continued. "I'm not scared of none of you... I'll get a shotgun and stick it up your ass your white asshole." Warning to his theme, Mr Howe went on: "Listen, I don't like white people jumping up and waving black banners. Go and join the National Front, you c***." Enchanting stuff.

IN his News of the World column, my friend Michael Winner expresses his anger at the New Year's Eve strike planned by the staff of London Underground. "As always, it is you and me who'll suffer," he writes. How very true, and Michael will certainly feel the pain on Thursday week. Mind you, even at the best of times it is tricky catching the last tube home from the Sandy Lane Hotel in Barbados.

IN the magazine's bumper holiday double issue, we find the Sunshine Boys of the Spectator on rare form. Taki-George appears to have suffered a breakdown, accusing General Pinochet of being "an honest soldier who has inner strength. He has dignity," Paul Johnson, however, adopts a mellow tone. "I love the Jews and when I am defending them I feel myself a Jew of the Jews," writes Paul, considering relations between the religions. "But I am also a Christian of the Christians, and a Catholic of the Catholics." He is also a Naughty Boy of the Naughty Boys, it goes without saying, but in spite of that we wish the dear old boy the sanest and most rational of Christmases.

THE Guardian's story today about of Mandy Mandelson's acceptance of a £373,000 loan from Geoffrey Robinson has yet to sink in. People have speculated how he managed to buy so splendid a Nottingham Hill house on his then MP's salary of £43,000, but I never went along with this mischievous rumour mongering, believing — and call me an indulgent fool if you will — that the won the money for his splendid Nottingham Hill house in a game of three card brag with a man he met down the pub. The whole thing is simply incredible, and the Diary will return to the matter if and when the shock has worn off.



This ought to be the end of the line for our role as an American puppet

Gulf crisis

Hugo Young



FOR Britain, the four-night bombing of Iraq is a moment of new and future truth. The meaning of the event will not ultimately be what it now seems to be. What it now seems to be is the triumph of an old foreign policy: instant allegiance with America, readiness to project military force under US control, pride in British uniqueness in such a stance. What it will soon do is open up the room for scepticism about this old policy, and the need for Prime Minister Blair to recognise that it cannot co-exist, unmodified, with his new one. Such awareness will take time to burrow. Household gods will shudder. But now is not too soon to say what will drive the process.

In 10 Downing Street, the feeling, for the moment, is one of satisfaction with a job well done. It was, they thought, a model of planning and execution; and so, within the limits of the military, it was. They may also think Mr Blair handled himself as a sober statesman, which, again in the narrow sense of his street demeanour, he did. But this is where sobriety begins to impose its own unease. Never, in the long history of the relationship, has a British leader been more important to an American leader, while at the same time being so devoid of all control over what the other did.

What Blair offered Clinton was not merely military support but personal credibility. He was the respectable face, the proxy at the mike, for a near-ruined man. The sense of this being a two-nation operation, which was acutely sharpened by the Prime Minister's indispensable political role. And that was just a foretaste. Unless some-

thing changes, the solitary bonding of the US and UK is set to last a long time. The strategy is now for America to remain in the Gulf as a massive presence, the permanent policeman of Saddam Hussein, with Britain alongside. This cannot be allowed, without doing terrible damage to the other course Blair has set.

Now that the four nights have happened, the issue moves beyond bombing's rights and wrongs to a question about the future of Britain as well as Iraq. The two years for which Saddam is expected, according to Whitehall, to be back in his cage need to be used for a reconsideration of our priorities.

For the episode, while doubtless full of unwitting British heroism, had a humiliating aspect which should surely jolt the mind. Britain was the follower not the leader. Her history of fealty to Washington gave her no leverage. She could be all too utterly relied on. So when Washington sidelined the UN Security Council, Britain did likewise. When Washington said bomb, we bombed. When Washington finds itself without a single open supporter for this in the Arab world, we are drawn helplessly into the same zone of diplomatic exclusion. We have too much muscle to be called poodles. But we're the running dogs of Washington, trapped in the chains of an unexamined history in which the invasion of Grenada in 1983 is the only known exception from our slavish support for American aggression wherever it may occur.

There have been pay-offs for this stance. The relationship makes us gainers in both hardware and software: missiles and intelligence. The history of all these decades

cannot and should not be unpicked overnight. But, on present plans for Saddam, we face months and years of powerless attachment to a strategy for which Washington is unable to enlist much other support, and which is being pursued, in any case, by a country that is directionless and divided.

This would be a dubious enough fate without the other half of it, which is the future Mr Blair has apparently been trying to map out for European defence. Downing Street dismisses this contradiction: indeed, tries to make a virtue of it. Having taken the initiative for Anglo-French defence collaboration three weeks before Operation Desert Fox, Blair and his people feel barricaded against the charge of being over-Atlanticist. They think their cred will remain good with the Europeans, and moreover that Washington will banish its hesitations about plans for semi-separate European defence. Everyone's a winner: the usual Blairite painless optimism.

THIS may endure a little while. Not even the French are yet rushing to denounce the capture of Saddam too openly. But talking to a major European foreign minister at the weekend, I did not mistake his scepticism and despair about what will happen next. Washington's simplistic assumptions about what might be made to happen in Baghdad, coupled with Anglo-American exaggeration of the military threat Iraq actually posed, attract the private scorn of some of the very European leaders Mr Blair would like to be closest to. Very soon, it will no longer be good enough for the Prime Minister to assert that he can

square these circles: indeed, that he's uniquely placed to call them intersecting triangles, to which Britain holds the key.

To the contrary. Britain is not seen — has in recent days forewarned the desire to be seen — as mediator or initiator of an EU policy towards Iraq. Though Robin Cook now talks of diplomatic offensives to explain the policy and gather support, it is US policy he's talking about. Britain's role at this time is not to lead Europe, but to bulldoze Europe into backing whatever Washington does: a doomed enterprise, and one that, in the time the bombing has made available, requires fundamental re-evaluation. For the bombing was not unsuccessful. It did knock out a lot of hardware. What it also knocked out, however, was any credible belief that repeated doses of the same treatment, at massive cost and with minimal support, administered by just two nations, are the right and only prescription for the future.

The smaller of those two nations, in particular, looks diminished, even as she counts her scalp. She was part of a policy that talked itself into an obligatory use of force. But this should be the end of that line. It is time to examine whether the national interest any longer rests in being nothing more creative than the sly White House can rely on. To set in train such a release from history would require intellectual boldness from Mr Blair, but not much political courage. The alternative, after all, is with marooned, friendless, and everything to do with the mounting melancholy by the only allies among whom Britain has a chance of being the master not the puppet.

We shall pay dearly for the Treasury need to hide borrowing

Cutting up the beds

Polly Toynbee



WHEN a cry of anguish goes up from some local hospital facing closure, it's usually wise to turn a deaf ear. Rationalisation into bigger specialist hospitals is almost always an improvement, however much people protest locally. Kidderminster looks at first sight like a typical case in point. Its hospital is due for closure of all its 307 in-patient beds, losing its accident and emergency department. Last week the local community health council went to the High Court to apply for a judicial review, with £50,000 raised locally for legal costs.

Thousands have been out demonstrating to keep this hospital open. All this is familiar territory. Hospital closures always cause outrage, which Labour in opposition was happy to exploit, joining local campaigns to keep open several that were rightly being shut down (Barts was just the most high profile). There is fierce local loyalty for any hospital — even if it's a ramshackle group of old Nissen huts, a pre-war fever hospital or a Victorian workhouse. Local families think of it fondly as their ancient place of birth and death, despite research warning that some much-loved local hospitals are indeed places of death, with low medical success rates. General surgeons struggling to do operations beyond their capability often have poor results compared with specialists in bigger hospitals. Accident and emergency units save more lives in big regional centres: a longer ambulance journey is far less dangerous than arriving in a small local unit with no specialist consultants on duty though local people refuse to believe it.

That has been the received wisdom until now. So when Kidderminster kicked up a fuss, it just looked like the same old story — local rage from people who didn't know about medical results. But recently these closures deserve a closer scrutiny. Kidderminster is among those hospitals whose imminent demise may have little to do with medical improvement and everything to do with the Gadarene dash for Private Finance Initiative deals. Worcester Royal Infirmary is to be rebuilt with money borrowed privately under the PFI. In the process, Kidderminster and other hospitals are being merged and the whole service downsized. There will be 28 per cent fewer beds, despite average waiting list times of over a year. Borrowing money privately through PFI will cost them an extra £6 million more than if the Treasury had lent them the money — a tenth of their overall budget. All that money will have to be found from "efficiency savings" in their local running costs. So Kidderminster's beds will close to help pay for it, although the health authority admits it is a good hospital with no suggestion of medical inadequacy.

BED CUTS aren't necessarily wrong: 100,000 NHS beds have been cut in the last 10 years, partly because of the rapid growth of day surgery. No one knows exactly how many beds we now need, which is why Frank Dobson has called for a national beds review. However managers wanting to make cuts sometimes use a gimmick to justify it: in Worcester they checked their beds on one day and claimed that 40 per cent were filled with people who didn't need them — waiting for tests and consultant rounds or waiting to be discharged to nursing

homes. How this age-old problem is to be suddenly solved is not explained. For by any standards, Worcester's proposed 28 per cent bed cut in about three years is pretty severe.

The worst-riding cuts will fall on the mental health services. Plans mean losing 26 acute mental beds — the very beds Health Secretary Frank Dobson has promised to increase nationally. Consultant clinical psychologist Simon O'Loughlin at Kidderminster says there are 136 beds currently in the country — already too few with around 10 mental patients now in an overspill private hospital. The chief executive of Worcester's specialist hospitals says there will be only 110 beds in the new hospital configuration. Kidderminster's mental health service will be devastated. It is closely integrated with local social services and community care, with patients familiar with their local hospital. In future those ill enough to need a bed will be sent over to Bromsgrove, far from the community services they know. "Many agree to come in here for observation because they know us. They'll refuse to go to Bromsgrove, so then we'll have to section them instead which will make treating them much harder."

HEALTH ministers are touring the country boasting that they are providing "the biggest hospital building programme in the history of the NHS". The question is at what price? The galloping programme of new hospitals now being built on the Private Finance Initiative has an imperative of its own in local health planning. Is it always worth having a gleaming new hospital if it means many fewer



Such a proposed bed cut of 28 per cent in three years is pretty severe

beds at far higher cost? Once we used to inherit buildings bought by previous generations, but now under PFI we are about to pass on to the next generation far higher debts than ever before. We shall pay dearly for the Treasury's need to hide public borrowing. PFI's only purpose is to circumvent arcane Treasury accounting practices. Money borrowed on the private market doesn't appear in the Public Spending Borrowing Requirement figures. While we preach somewhat smugly to other countries with apparently higher borrowing, we are now disguising over £10 billion of our own by living it off into the private sector, at a far higher cost than traditional government borrowing. These debts will last for 20 or 30 years, by which time the hospitals themselves may be redundant.

Every penny of interest has to be sliced off the total NHS budget and it disappears forever into private pockets. But if the money is borrowed from the Treasury it is recycled back into the NHS. These needlessly high interest charges are being paid to keep up appearances — a way to spend while pretending to keep Labour's prudent promises. The price of this face-saving is high and paying for it will inevitably distort local NHS priorities.

Encouraging democracy may be a better idea than dropping bombs

Satanic outcome

Gulf crisis

Tariq Ali

THE DEVASTATION is over. The bombers have returned to base. The missiles have been put away. We will be spared the hallucinatory trances of Tony Blair outside No.10 Downing Street till his services are once again required by Washington. Madeline Albright and Robin Cook will be forced to terminate the orgy of moral self-righteousness with which they have attempted to drown local dissent. Peace has returned to Baghdad.

Its citizens can freely sweep over the silence of hastily-dug graves. It is an open question whether this immoral adventure has left Saddam Hussein more diminished and degraded than Clinton and Blair. Kofi Annan and President Chirac appear to think so, but what has been virtually ignored is the response of the world at large, a world largely absent

from our television screens. There has been near-universal condemnation of these raids across five continents. Many have seen the attack as a brutal attempt to strengthen sanctions and stop Iraqi oil entering the world market and causing a further decline in prices. The bombing of Baghdad has set back for at least a decade the cause of secular and democratic politics in the Muslim world.

For some years the House of Islam has been under siege from within. A new breed of radical religious fundamentalists have emerged, an expression of the despair that has swept this world. The failure of nationalism and socialism, their inability to modernise and resist the West, created a vacuum which has been filled by political Islam. In the old cold war days it was the US which funded the Muslim Brotherhood, the Jamaat-i-Islami and their brother groups. They were seen as one bulwark against communism. Times have changed. The

new leaderships and various successor groups who seek to exploit religion do so in the name of a jihad against the Great Satan. They attack the greed of tyrannical sultans and venal dictators. They attack the Saudi rulers and Gulf elites as men who make religion the backbone of reaction, a tool to perpetrate all the sins of injustice.

Dictators are best toppled by their own people, as in Indonesia

They pour scorn on the roving swarms of businessmen in designer suits. In their eyes these people are the creatures of hypocritical and unscrupulous US presidents and giant multinationals, whose only real interest is oil. They feel that the only way to defeat the king in the White House is through an appeal to Allah,

who is the king of kings. So they struggle to impose "Islamic regimes" and the divine rule of clerics, a dictatorship of the one and only Truth. They look to the Sudan, to Algeria and some, though not many, are even partial to the crazed fanaticism of the Taliban in Kabul (a regime whose principal leaders were once on the payroll of the CIA).

Tony Blair's cheap gibe when confronted by opposition that the dissenting MP would not be permitted to speak his mind freely in Baghdad was beside the point. Could he have spoken freely in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait or even Egypt? Saddam is not alone in ruling through coercion rather than consent. And herein lies the problem. Democracy is largely absent from the region. Perhaps this is the only way that oil can be exploited, but if so it is time to end the cant. Madeline Albright says that the war against Islamic fundamentalism is

the "war of the future". Really? If she believes her own rhetoric she should think seriously before helping their cause. The bombing of Baghdad has further weakened the frail aqueducts of secular democratic politics in the region. Poets and novelists, like Adonis and Darwish, Mahfouz and Munif, have defended the empire of reason and argued for a decent drapery of life for every citizen. They have defied sultans and clerics. Their voices are beginning to fade, drowned by the noise of bombs and cries of jihad.

Dictators are best toppled by their own people, as we have seen recently in Indonesia. Lifting the sanctions would help to strengthen the people of Iraq. Encouraging democratic rule in the neighbouring states would be a much better defence against Saddam than US missiles. It may already be too late.

Tariq Ali's most recent play was Ugly Rumours (with Howard Brenton)

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Reflect and rethink

No more bombing

SILLY insults from Alastair Campbell about intellectual grip do not begin to address the profound doubts attending British participation in the American-led bombing of Iraq — anxieties registered across the political spectrum which are likely to go on growing until there is evidence a cratered Iraq is in anyway better for Iraqis, for the region, for the world than the messy stand-off that held until last week. The misgivings are as evident among so-called realist and military experts as those whose first and admirable instinct is to deplore the use of force except where self-evidently exhausted. As the smoke (literally) clears some kind of interim assessment becomes both possible and necessary. And it's negative.

The Blair government (and that's a singular noun, since for all the rumours of John Prescott this or Robin Cook that, the public impatience of the Cabinet is remarkable) has chosen a perilous course. Events could make it look a fruitful gamble — say Saddam were to be toppled in a coup. For the time being the British position has been made to look all the more hazardous by "standing alone" with the United States at a moment when that country's domestic preoccupations are so strong. The cost of British policy in terms of extra defence spending is only just beginning to register. The price has also to be calculated diplomatically in terms of relations inside the European Union, in the Arab world, and in the future capacity of the United Nations

to express anything resembling the consensus of the free world. No tight calculation can yet be made but it is hard to identify immediate benefits that outweigh these expenditures, and that's even before addressing the loss of life on the ground in Iraq or the continuing perhaps deeper immiseration of its civilian population.

There would, possibly, be justification if the armed attack had created new conditions, either for political formations to take on Saddam or new steps to be made towards a regional "solution" to what is, after all, the problem of a regional anomaly. Too much can be made of riots in Damascus or Rahat (reactions in Tehran and Riyadh have been much more nuanced) but there's no escaping the way the Netanyahu government felt empowered to choose this moment to suspend the Wye River accord. It needs to be said there was no stable status quo before last Wednesday. The presence of UNSCOM created a dynamic which was leading towards some kind of response. Yesterday Americans as good as admitted that no response from the United States — with or without cover from the UN Security Council — would have meant unacceptable loss of credibility. Some people find that kind of word in a life-and-death context deeply offensive but it does have meaning, not least in a world in which, for better or worse, there is a single power capable of projecting force and maintaining international order. That power is the United States of America.

But if on balance this action was unjustified, what now? The stabledoor open, the Blair government turns to address the lack of support for the Anglo-American position. That means listening as well as instructing, especially in the capitals of the European Union. Does Tony Blair really want historians to compare him

with Harold Wilson in abject deference to the "special relationship"? The issue today is the Government's promise to bomb again. That commitment cannot be supported. There might be circumstances ahead when the commitment of British forces in the Gulf is once again justified, in coalition. After the UN's presence is reconstituted; after incontrovertible evidence is amassed that Saddam constitutes a potential threat. It is not now.

Not that funny

Spying is a serious business

JOURNALISTS find it hard to write about spies with a straight face. They lace their stories with James Bond pastiche, so that (in the current intrigue over Dominic Lawson of the Sunday Telegraph) there is much hilarity over editors in tuxedos with secretaries called Miss Moneybags. Which is all very funny so long as it is not allowed to obscure the disturbing undercurrents beginning to emerge from the mists of the Lawson story.

Mr Lawson's accusers are a long way short of proving that he is any kind of agent for the security services. All we know for sure is that while he was the editor of the Spectator he ran at least two pseudonymous articles by a serving MI6 agent about the Bosnian conflict. Mr Lawson insists that he did not know that "Kenneth Roberts" was an MI6 man. He was, he says, simply impressed by the author's knowledge of the situation and by the quality of his writing. It is possible, says Mr Lawson, that "Kenneth Roberts" was simply trying to carve out a second career as a journalist. It is far more likely

that this was a deliberate attempt to find a berth for a particular line in a mainstream magazine read by opinion-formers. As it happens, the line argued in one piece is identical to that being pushed to reporters by MI6 agents in the field in Bosnia. "Roberts" accused journalists of failing to investigate claims by the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic that the Bosnian Muslims were responsible for the Sarajevo market massacre in 1994. This grotesque fiction served the FO agenda of resisting calls for international intervention against Serbia's genocidal pogrom.

Spectator readers were utterly innocent of the hidden provenance of, or agenda behind, this piece. That is bad enough. Yet so far there has been a deafening lack of protest at MI6's sleight of hand from either Mr Lawson or the present editor of the magazine. The Sunday Times goes further and alleges that at least three MI6 officers claimed to be Spectator journalists while working undercover in Bosnia, Belgrade and Moldova.

This is stupidity of a dangerous order: the sort of behaviour which could well jeopardise the lives of genuine reporters working in war zones. More silence from the Spectator. No word from Tom King, in charge of parliamentary oversight. Is it that they think it's just a giggle? Or do they really fail to see the point?

'Branson has found something large under his flight path. It's called China'

John Featherstone, Letters

respondents, only 9 per cent closely associated Christmas with Jesus Christ; 53 per cent saw Santa Claus as the key to the Christmas experience. Christians responded with predictable dismay, complaining that the "true meaning" of the festival had been overwhelmed by a tide of consumerism. But the Church of England is no longer prepared to turn the other cheek: now it means business.

Last month, it launched its own web site to fight for the soul of cyberspace. This week, it launched a campaign in the Midlands, showing a congregation of troubled individuals tag-lined: "You don't have to be perfect to go to church this Christmas." The fact that the campaign was launched in the Midlands may not be coincidental; last month Birmingham council, claiming it was anxious not to offend those in other faiths, renamed Christmas "Winterfest". The Bishop of Birmingham, the Right Revd Mark Santer, said he laughed out loud at the name, and the homophonic apt Santer has been a key supporter of the Church's Christmas ad campaign.

Over the weekend, the Archbishop of York, Dr David Hope, made a stinging attack on the Millennium Dome, contrasting its *folie de grandeur* with the simplicity and humility of Christ's birth. The Dome neatly encapsulates the God v Mammon argument, and pity the Bishop of Maidstone, the Right Revd Gavin Reid, who chairs the Archbishops' Millennium Advisory Group and has to "sell" the Spirit Zone to the traditionalists. The Church of England, in its general acceptance of the Dome and now its willingness to take its message to television, is seeking an accommodation with Mammon; it remains to be seen whether there will be room at the Holiday Inn.

Letters to the Editor

The balloon goes up — and down

YOU failed to point out that operators incur additional incremental costs at smaller sized stores in inner city areas (Stores 'charge more in poor areas', December 21).

These higher costs are typically the result of delivery restrictions imposed both locally and nationally and the need to provide extra security, especially in the more deprived areas.

While you rightly identified lack of competition as one reason why prices can be higher, I would add that the Government can do more to promote competition in the high street by making it easier for food retailers to operate in town centres.

David Smales,
Chief executive, Sumerfield.

BAA wants to build a cargo airport at Alconbury! And what BAA wants, BAA gets — after all, they are getting a fifth terminal at Heathrow in spite of overwhelming local opposition, and having forsworn a third runway, they have to find some way of accommodating all the extra passenger flights.

What better way than unloading the "less valuable" cargo flights onto our rural brethren? If John Major and Brian Mawhinney don't like the idea, perhaps they should start campaigning against Heathrow T5.

Simon R Hill,
London.

RICHARD Branson has found something large under his flight path. It's called China. It was certainly there when he took off and now our Civil Service is being deployed to organise a right of passage.

This is bad but faintly explicable news for three Virgin train passengers.

John Featherstone,
Hemel Hempstead.

Four strikes and for owt

WHAT Phillip Knightley did not spell out in the "Painted" media coverage of Desert Run (Letters, December 21) is that the Ministry of Defence decided, as long ago as the Falkland War, that British journalists should be prevented from doing their job properly. In the Gulf war those of us accompanying British ground troops into battle were deceived by the Ministry of Defence, which held back all the reports sent in the first 48 hours of fighting.

More fool us for believing them, perhaps. But the public should have no illusion about the degree of control that the authorities can now exert when British troops are in action.

Philip Jacobson,
London.

YOU point out, rightly (Leader, December 21), that a medium-term strategy is lacking in the present dispute with Iraq. We can only hope that the aim is to topple Saddam, or deny him the capability of waging war in the Middle East.

Getting rid of him would involve the use of ground troops. Here a difficulty arises, since this would involve American casualties. The domestic US effect of this would be to undermine the standing of a President already in dire trouble.

Every policy has a price, and there is undoubtedly a price to pay for our unqualified support of American action. Our position in the Middle East is weakened, future trading prospects in particular being affected. We risk the contempt reserved for the bully's accomplice. And British claims (and we) to see clearly the nature of Desert Fox; truly the uneatable in full pursuit of the unspeakable.

But I will not allow you to misrepresent my position. As far back as the 1950s (before Tony Blair had even taken up politics) I was co-ordinating anti-Saddam activities in

Scotland, and no speech I ever made on Iraq leaves anyone who wants to hear in any doubt that my views have not changed. And by the way my so-called "salute" was to Iraq's 22 million sufferers and not to their leader.

Saddam Hussein is a second rate Saladin, but President Clinton, the lying liar, carries the banner of the Crusaders with all the believability of the Rev Jimmy Swaggart.

George Galloway MP,
House of Commons.

THE support given by Liberal Democrat MPs to the unlawful aggression against Iraq must again call into question the wisdom of the accord drawn up between Paddy Ashdown and the Prime Minister.

It is hard to believe that, had the LibDems chosen a full-blooded oppositional role to a Government with a dangerously large majority they would have so tamely accepted the cruise missile strikes against the Sudan, or have backed the Crime and Conspiracy Bill.

We should have been unwilling to give our support to the strikes against Iraq because of our party's strong allegiance to the UN which has been "degraded and diminished" by the Anglo-US action, and because of our equally firm conviction that Britain's future interests are best served by a closer union with our European partners, most of whom have been either opposed to the strikes or lukewarm in their support.

We should also have taken far greater account of the effect of the action upon Arab sensibilities. Surely Paddy Ashdown knows that most Muslims are convinced that the US has declared war on Islam.

Bombing Iraq has strengthened that conviction given Saddam more influence upon popular Muslim opinion.

Cllr John Hipkin,
Liberal Democrats
Cambridge

Unfortunately, this is all part of a much wider Middle Eastern problem, including the rarely discussed Israeli nuclear arsenal.

Name and address supplied.

[FIND it extraordinary that the justifiatory propaganda issued by our Government contains no clear statement of how Britain's national interests are served by the onslaught on Iraq.

The childish language employed by the Prime Minister and his colleagues to demonise Saddam Hussein applies, as everyone knows, to an unfortunately wide range of dictators, who similarly commit atrocities "against their own people". Nor is he the only regime engaged in manufacturing weapons of mass destruction.

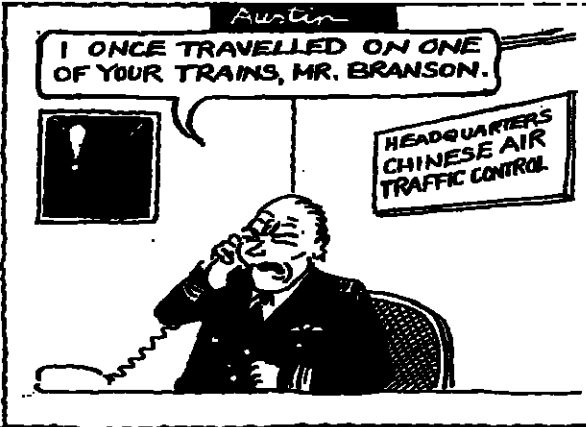
Equally extraordinary was the palpably totalitarian atmosphere encouraged by Mr Blair in the Commons "debate" on his Government's bombardment of Iraq. Particularly disturbing was the pseudo-patriotism employed by Blair's bully boys as they sought to silence criticism by claiming that it betrayed our military personnel.

However one tries to interpret this disreputable display, the conclusion here is inescapable: New Labour-Old Imperialism.

I M Lewis,
Emeritus Professor of Anthropology,
London School of Economics.

UNLIKE, I suspect, most of your readers, you took an agonisingly long time (whilst thousands of Iraqis were being killed by Anglo-American (and French) jets to see clearly the nature of Desert Fox; truly the uneatable in full pursuit of the unspeakable.

But I will not allow you to misrepresent my position. As far back as the 1950s (before Tony Blair had even taken up politics) I was co-ordinating anti-Saddam activities in



Pensioners demand justice

THE headline on your pension letters (No joy for pensioners, December 17) should have read "No justice for pensioners". We are not talking about hand-outs, but about a scheme we contributed to during our working life, fully expecting our pensions would be honoured by whatever government was in power.

We have a situation where all political parties are happy to shrug off past commitments and let the value of our pension dwindle to a point where it is virtually valueless. Pensioners are now effectively disenfranchised. The track record of private pension schemes is such that it would probably be better to

A food by any other name would be just as genetically modified

I WAS interested to read that Professor Black (Letters, December 19) doesn't want us to use the term "genetically engineered food".

The industry has moved from "genetically engineered", through "modified" to the more reassuringly old-fashioned "biotechnology". But to get away from any unpleasant connotations that genetics, engineering or technology might have when applied to your breakfast, "life sciences" is the preferred option.

The nuclear industry tried this trick when they renamed the Windscale nuclear reprocessing plant Sellafield. It did not work.

Peter Melchett,
Executive director,
Greenpeace.

PROFESSOR Black misses the point of Lord Melchett's article. The point which campaigners wish to have heard is that the public's interests are not being served by hiding the reality of genetically modified food. We have to ask, just why is the GM industry so reluctant to shout their wares from the roof tops?

The professor muddies the waters by confusing natural selection, scientific breeding and genetic modification. GM deliberately introduces genes which could never naturally be introduced into the plants or animals. The public is also right to be concerned about GM crops which are engineered to be resistant to some pesticides, because there is a very real likelihood of the "Gene-y" getting out of the bottle. There comes a time, occasionally when the scientific possibility is neither desirable nor responsible.

Dr Nina Baker,
Scottish Green Party.

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Endpiece: hero talk

Roy Hattersley

THIS advertising industry prides itself on being honest, decent and something else I cannot remember because it is rarely on view in television commercials and on billboards. It also insists that it exists to help ignorant consumers gratify endogenous needs rather than persuade middle spendthrifts to waste money on trash. So there must be people who have felt frustrated for years — deprived

until now of the chance to buy a mobile telephone which changes its colour at the whim of fashion-conscious subscribers.

However, creating, rather than meeting, demand is not the advertisers' worst offence this Christmas. There is a mobile telephone commercial which has all the aesthetic attraction of finger nails scratched on glass. The slogan of the advertisement, is "one 2 one" and the sales pitch is built on various celebrities revealing the name of the person with whom they would most like to have an intimate conversation. At times when affluent youths are thought to be watching television, the come-on is delivered by Ian Wright and Chris Evans.

Ian Wright is a great striker, an ebullient personality, a rotten chat-show host and an icon to the young black British. As well as a huge success — money, fame and personal satisfaction — he exudes a brash refusal to be

pushed around. On and off the football field, he is immensely proud of being who he is. That instinct guarantees he is conspicuously reluctant to be treated with anything but respect. It is one of the qualities which makes him attractive, despite having lost the winning goal for West Ham when they beat Sheffield Wednesday a couple of months ago. However, Mr Wright has no great record of interest or activity in politics. Notwithstanding that gap in his known enthusiasms, he chose to have his "one-to-one" with Martin Luther King and — in tribute to his own volatile temper — asked how his hero was able to remain calm in face of white-supremacist provocation. Or was Martin Luther King chosen for him? From what I know of the advertising industry, I suspect that the choice was made for him after weeks of careful market research. I do not suggest that an account executive held Ian Wright's hand,

because he is a footballer. Subjects for commercials are routinely decided by scientific calculation. That may be professionally understandable, but it proves a squalid point. The industry exists to pretend that there is virtue and emotion in the tricks of television, hero and hero worship united on a cloud. And there was a moment of cartoon action drawn in the style of a Sergeant Pepper record sleeve. I make no complaint about that. In death as in life, John Lennon is part of show business. But the young man who defied the tanks in Tiananmen Square is not. Yet he suddenly flashed onto our

screens — brave, alone and apparently a reason for buying a mobile telephone. I risk being accused of gross pomposity by recording my distaste for the decision — however it was taken — to exploit the memory of Martin Luther King and evoke the spirit of Tiananmen Square in order to sell consumer durables. It is not a question of good taste. Whenever I hear that subject mentioned, I reach for my whoopee cushion. Even in the days of militant female protest, I took no exception to advertisements for "ladies" lingerie. They never made me want to wear it. But I did not believe that the sight of all that flesh did anybody much harm.

Using dead heroes as door-to-door salesmen is different. The slightest criticism of the advertising industry always provokes what nuclear theorists call a disproportionate response. Anyone who suggests that choosing the right shampoo might not make you

the British juelin champion becomes an instant enemy of the people. I know about you, the angry letters proclaim. You want a Soviet economy in which a ministry of distribution tells us how much firewood we can buy. Without advertising, they say, we will all have to queue-up to buy shoes made out of old tyres and live on cabbage soup.

I do not want to close down those agencies with strange sounding treble-barrelled names and no sense of propriety. They are essential to the society in which we live — an economy which sacrifices social justice for the freedom (of those who can afford it) to choose between different sorts of mobile telephones. But it is possible to be necessary without being admirable. Near where I live in Derbyshire, a man collects rotting sheep carcasses from the moors and sells them for unimaginable purposes. I am told that, without him, our general well being would be at risk. But I

BT

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Finance Guardian

Inflation threat recedes



Building for growth... Chinese builders at work on a new Shanghai viaduct, part of the country's huge public investment programme

PHOTOGRAPH: EUGENE HOSKOVAP

IMF urges more rate cuts

Charlotte Denny

THE Bank of England has room to make further cuts to the cost of borrowing next year, as the threat of inflation recedes, according to the International Monetary Fund.

The IMF said yesterday it was projecting a sharp slowdown in UK growth in 1999 while deteriorating global economic conditions mean inflation is likely to fall below the Government's target of 2.5 per cent.

For the second successive year the fund has been forced to update its biannual estimates for the world economy because financial turbulence has made its original forecast look too optimistic.

The IMF's economists now think the world economy will grow by just 2.2 per cent in 1999, 0.3 percentage points lower than it was forecasting two months ago. In May, the fund estimated the world economy would grow by 3.7 per cent next year.

The Washington-based institution estimates UK growth is likely to slow to 0.9 per cent next year while unemployment will rise by 150,000. The revision puts the

fund in line with most independent UK forecasters and below the Treasury's prediction of 1-1.5 per cent growth.

The IMF said the three cuts to interest rates instituted by the Bank of England since October which have taken interest rates from their peak of 7.5 per cent down to 6.25 per cent were appropriate, but that "monetary policy is still

relatively tight, however, and there is significant scope for rates to be cut further as growth weakens and inflation concerns recede".

But the slowdown will be short-lived, according to a separate IMF report on the UK also published yesterday. It gives a thumbs-up to changes to economic policy-making instituted by the Labour

Government. The new rules for the public finances and the Government's decision to put the Bank in charge of setting interest rates put the UK in line with best practices internationally, the fund said in its annual assessment of UK economic policies.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, welcomed the IMF assessment as a vindication

of the "tough actions" taken by the Government. But the Treasury said there were no plans to follow the fund's advice to change the main measure of price pressure in the economy to the standardised European index.

Despite lowering its overall forecast for the world econ-

omy, the IMF said the immediate threats to global growth had eased after central banks in most industrialised countries cut rates in the latter part of the year. But it identified five possible threats to its forecast which could still throw the world economy into recession next year.

Private investment flows into emerging countries have fallen to very low levels after the Russian debt default in August and some countries could face a balance of payments crisis as a result.

The outlook in Japan, the world's second largest economy, remains uncertain, and questions remain about the adequacy of recent stimulus packages.

Trade adjustments could lead to destabilising moves in exchange rates between the major currencies. Further appreciation of the yen would be "particularly unhelpful".

The large trade adjustments as a result of the Asian crisis could lead to a rise in protectionist pressures which would cut into world growth.

Finally, the recovery in stock markets since August means equity prices, particularly in the US, are back in a range that may not be sustainable.

The materialisation of the above risks, even on a relatively moderate scale, could easily cut world growth by a further percentage point in 1999.

Bank losses are trade balance's gain

Charlotte Denny

BRYTAIN'S trading balance with the rest of the world improved markedly over the summer, despite the buffeting exporters are receiving from the strength of sterling.

A record surplus on investment income helped propel the current account to £3.3 billion into the black between July and September. It is the second highest quarterly surplus on record, according to the Office for National Statistics, and almost wipes out the deficits of £1.4 and £1.3 billion notched up in the first six months of the year.

But the ONS said the improvement in the current account — measuring the

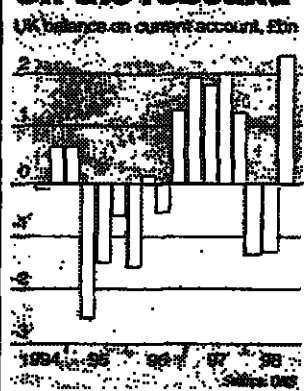
balance of visible and invisible trade — was largely the result of the huge losses made by foreign-owned banks based in the City during the financial turbulence in August and September.

This reduced the profits they sent out of the UK by £3.5 billion compared with the previous quarter, while overseas profits of British firms increased, resulting in a surplus of £5.16 billion on investment income.

Separate figures, also published yesterday by the ONS, showed the pace of economic growth slowed to 0.4 per cent in the third quarter, in line with earlier estimates.

Analysts said the buoyant overall result for the current account disguised

further deterioration in the visible trade balance. The deficit on trade in goods for the third quarter was £5.2 billion, the highest



recorded since the second quarter of 1990.

"This reflected the weakening of exports to non-European Union countries — especially Asia and Russia — and a pick up in import volumes as domestic demand remained fairly solid," said Dharshini David at HSBC markets.

"With the strength of the pound still likely to impact on export volumes in coming months, a further deterioration in the trade in goods balance is likely."

The Treasury is forecasting an overall deficit on the current account for 1998 of £1.75 billion, but Ms David said another strong result for investment income next quarter could result in a small overall surplus for the year.

Swiss millions buy 'boutique'

Jill Treanor

MORE than 100 of the City's top investment bankers jumped up the country's rich list yesterday after selling their firm to Swiss Re, the Zurich-based insurance company. They own and work at Fox-Pitt Kelton, one of the City's best investment banking "boutiques".

The sale will mean hefty payouts for the bankers who owned Fox-Pitt Kelton, many of whom may find their stakes are valued at more than £1 million. They will initially receive shares in Swiss Re, however, rather than cash.

City sources estimated that Fox-Pitt Kelton might be worth between \$50 and \$150 million. The exact price of the transaction was not disclosed.

The deal has also been devised so that "key" bankers are locked in for five years.

Among those thought to be tied in are chairman Anthony Hamilton, chief executive Colin McGill and leading analyst Bob Yates.

"We're all staying on. There's no change in personnel at all," Mr McGill said yesterday.

Although highly secretive, Fox-Pitt Kelton has an excellent reputation in the City for its knowledge of the financial service sector.

Mr McGill said yesterday

From rags to redundancies for British textile companies

Tom McGhie

THE economic crisis in Asia and the strong pound has again played havoc with the British textile industry, threatening jobs and plunging Dawson International into the red.

The Scottish-based company which owns the Pringle knitwear outfit was yesterday forced to issue a profit warning. Chief executive Peter Forrest said profits for the second half of the year to January 2, 1999, were likely to be significantly below market expectations. Losses for the year before exceptional items are likely to be around £11 million. The company will not be paying a final dividend.

The Sherwood Group, which has a bra and lace factory in Cumbernauld, Scotland, has been forced to announce 400 redundancies as sales plunge as the market is flooded by cheap imports. Jobs will go in Scotland and at the firm's factories in France, Germany, Holland and Italy.

Managing director Jim Telfer said sales of bras had been badly affected by the pound. The board had decided that the solution was to cut back capacity by 25 per cent to offset falling sales.

Sherwood has also been affected by changes in fashion and a fall in demand in South

East Asia for its lace products. The company has put aside \$6.8 million for the closures.

Mr Forrest said: "We believe that the timely actions taken earlier this year, combined with the changes to be implemented in the US in January 1999, will ensure that the group will remain in a position to exploit any upturn in consumer trading."

In September, Dawson International revealed worsening losses of £23.6 million in the first half of the year. The company failed to find a buyer earlier this year when it was forced to shed 700 jobs to focus on its core cashmere business. Shares have plunged from a high of 66p this year to 9p where it was trading yesterday.

Plans to redevelop a former Royal Marines barracks could create up to 2,000 new jobs in a city that has been hit by post cold war defence cuts.

English Partnerships, the government-sponsored body set up to regenerate vacant and abandoned buildings, confirmed yesterday it had acquired the redundant Seaton Barracks in Plymouth and would start work on transforming the site early in the new year. The 94-acre site, standing empty since 1996, has already been zoned for employment uses by Plymouth City Council.



Channel ferry premiere for Caine gluttony

Terry Macalister

THE actor Michael Caine is moving into the cross-channel catering business by offering food from his Langan's Brasserie on P&O Stena Line ferries.

The first nautical Langan's Brasserie will open on the 28-tonne super-ferry Burgundy in the new year with the rest starting in time for the summer season on six other vessels which ply between Dover and Calais.

Ferry companies are desperate to attract new business as they prepare for the probable loss of duty free sales on June 30 and face increasing competition from the Channel Tunnel. P&O clearly believes it must go upstream to ditch the "booze cruise" tag.

To prepare, 40 ferry chefs, waiters and waitresses have been working at Langan's in the West End of London under the supervision of Mr Caine's co-owner, Richard Shepherd. He said: "We are very proud to be working with the best ferry company."

Menus are still being drawn up, but will include Langan's favourites, including bangers and mash with white onion sauce, cod and chips, and salmon and leek fishcakes.

Notebook

Stand by for a rocky 1999



Alex Brummer

HERE in the UK the section of the International Monetary Fund's update on the world economic outlook which will capture the most attention is the call to action at the Bank of England's monetary policy committee. The IMF economists are in little doubt that there is significant scope for interest rates to be cut further as growth weakens and inflation recedes. So, in the IMF view, the prospect for cheaper borrowing and mortgages in the months ahead is excellent.

But then one has to ask how did the UK (and much of the rest of the industrial world for that matter) reach a point that even the tough policymakers at the IMF have joined the doves on the MPC in demanding lower interest rates?

It is the global financial crisis, stupid. Turnmoil in the financial system, which has spread out from Japan, and East Asia since June 1997, has degraded industrial production across the globe and led the IMF to downgrade its growth forecast for 1999 on four occasions.

The latest forecast shows the world economy expanding by 2.2 per cent next year: that is down from 2.5 per cent in October 1997, after the East Asian typhoon was unleashed. Nevertheless, the Fund economists appear hopeful that they can see an upturn by the year 2000, when they see global output climbing by 3.5 per cent.

Anyone, however, looking to the IMF for comfort that the global financial crisis is past its worst will find precious little. Despite the efforts by the industrial economies to stabilise world markets — with bail-outs from Korea to Brazil, the rescue for Long-Term Capital Management and cuts in the cost of money the Fund argues that the balance of risks remains on the downside. In plainer language this is reach-for-the-lifeboat stuff.

So what then are those risks? The emerging markets problem is not yet over. Many of the emerging market countries are likely to encounter difficulties meeting their debt obligations when capital inflows have all but dried up.

The consequence of this could be a series of debt rescheduling talks on debt rescheduling further need to squeeze trade imbalances by constraining domestic growth and even another round of currency depreciations.

The second danger area is Japan. The IMF has retreated from the possibility of recovery in 1999 forecasting a further 0.5 per cent fall in real

GDP following the 2.5 per cent decline this year. The clearest risk is that the clean-up operation at Japan's banks will prove insufficient to convince markets that Tokyo is coming to terms with its problems.

The third area of uncertainty — which could be particularly important for free floating sterling — is currency instability among the industrial countries. The IMF accepts that some revaluation of the yen and the euro, against an overvalued US dollar, would be useful. But there is a clear worry that the markets will over-correct, particularly in the case of the yen, leading to severe turbulence. As George Soros has noted, in any such change in conditions on the foreign exchange market, the pound would be particularly vulnerable.

The fourth area of vulnerability is protectionism, particularly in Asia. The way trade relations can quickly spin out of control has just been illustrated by the US which has imposed 100 per cent duties on 16 European-made categories of product from handbags to chandeliers, as a result of the banana wars. There is some evidence that world trade already is falling off a cliff.

The greatest risk of all to the present recovery, according to the IMF economists, is the levels reached by equity markets which "may not be sustainable". This is particularly the case on Wall Street. The US economy is particularly vulnerable to a decline on Wall Street. Consumer spending in the US is being held up by the "wealth effect" with people who have made gains on the stock market spending as if those profits have been crystallised. If the stock market were to fall, then consumer spending could come crashing down with it, destroying US growth and feeding the European recovery.

Certainly this is the risk which is seen as most real by leading private sector economists.

ON TOP of these risks is the fallout from the decline in oil prices. The bombing of Iraq led to a temporary rally in crude oil prices. But after rising to \$11.35 on the day Desert Fox began they tumbled back to \$9.65 in the latest trading session. The effect on this is to squeeze incomes in oil producing developing countries from the Arabian Gulf to Mexico and to exert downward pressure on other commodity prices.

That the IMF felt it necessary at all to produce an updated year end world outlook report — so soon after their October publication — indicates the gravity of the present situation. Conditions may have stabilised since the collapse of LTCM in October, but the world economy is by no means out of the danger zone. In the UK the growth outlook has been lowered again to 0.4 per cent, which is near recession levels.

The next year looks as if it will be as perilous as the one which has just passed.

Banana-mad US bans bags

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE US administration initiated war on a new trade dispute announced plans to target a bizarre list of imports from the European Union in retaliation for alleged failure to open markets to banana imports from US multinationals.

The 16 products listed in Washington have nothing in common — except they have nothing to do with bananas. The list includes pecorino cheese, sweet biscuits, bath preparations, candles, handbags, paperboard, cartons, modern lithographs, knitted sweaters, bedlinen, lead-acid storage batteries, coffee and tea makers and chandeliers.

The US administration nevertheless said trade in the items was worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year the equivalent of what Americans claim their banana exporters are losing in Europe.

Prohibitive duties of 100 per cent on the products will

come into force from February 1 in what is escalating into the biggest trade row ever between the world's two biggest trading blocs.

The US maintains that the EU has not yet adequately complied with a World Trade Organisation ruling last year to amend its banana imports regime so as not to discriminate in favour of bananas from mainly Caribbean former colonies.

The EU claims it has amended the issuing of import licences to comply with the WTO and has offered to put the case again to the authorities in Geneva in an accelerated appeals procedure. It says US multinationals already control more than 75 per cent of the European market and that the US is not itself a banana exporter.

At the request of US wine producers, one of the EU's most successful exports — wine — was not listed on the grounds that there are hopes of gaining a wider US foothold in European markets.

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Australia 2,564	Garnsey 2,700	Malaysia 3,37	Singapore 2,72
Austria 1,930	Greece 455.08	Mexico 0.61	South Africa 9.70
Belgium 55.89	Hong Kong 12.68	Netherlands 3.0418	Spain 229.44
Canada 2,537.7	India 7.14	New Zealand 3.13	Sweden 13.15
Cyprus 1,872	Ireland 1,024.7	Norway 2.25	Switzerland 2.10
Denmark 10.36	Israel 7.08	Portugal 278.47	Turkey 100.00
Finland 5.32	Italy 2,698	Saudi Arabia 6.20	US 1.0374
France 9.0285	Japan 110.00	Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shilling and riyal)	

Cricket

Tour match: Australian XI v England XI

Blewett ties knot with England's bowlers

Mike Selvey sees an Australian reserve continue his love affair in Hobart

THERE is a feeling that Greg Blewett, Yorkshire's new overseas player, spends so much time in the company of English bowlers that his dismissal would constitute a breakdown in a relationship and be followed by a solicitor's letter, division of property and joint custody of the kids.

The two parties were on the best of terms for much of yesterday, as Blewett completed an unbeaten century before the Australian XI captain Darren Lehmann, Yorkshire's previous overseas incumbent, in the interests of keeping a potentially moribund match alive declared shortly after tea, conceding a

deficit of 176 in the knowledge that a mischievous follow-on would not be enforced.

With John Crawley (63) and Mark Butcher (89 not out) taking advantage of declaration bowling, hustling the match along but doing little for their personal predicaments of form, England had reached 165 for two by the close, a lead of 342.

Blewett tends not to miss out against English teams, and certainly not on slow, flat pitches and in blustery conditions that buffet bowlers around making rhythm and control difficult whether into the breeze or down it.

His first three Ashes Tests each produced a hundred in 1997, he made another for Australia A in a one-day international four years ago, scored 143 for South Australia earlier in the tour and now 169 not out, the highest individual score against England this winter. It was constructed over 54 hours.

He gave one chance, when 115, but otherwise there were few false shots, and those generally only when he attacked Peter Such's off-spin, with the occasional resulting misfire falling tantalisingly into gaps. There were 15 fours in all.

Until well into the afternoon it looked as if the England bowlers, never less than three — or on this occasion almost four — come in a rush. It began with Elliott who, having made 81, tried to turn Ben Hollis to leg but merely spooned a catch from the leading edge over the bowler's head, where Tudor (mid-on) and Fraser (mid-off) did their best to make a Horlicks of it before Tudor's common sense intervened.

Cory Richards then came and two balls later went, leg before to Hollis, a nice irony given that on the second day the bowler himself had sat through a long partnership between Atherton and Graeme Hick, only to be dismissed first ball. Lehmann then followed,



Mark time... Butcher on his way to an unbeaten 85 that helped England to a lead of 342 but it was off second-grade bowlers and true timing still eludes him

STU FORSTER

Scoreboard

ENGLAND XI: First innings 169-6 dec (M A Butcher 89, G A Hick 125, M R Ramprakash 65, Seven 3-46).

AUSTRALIAN XI: First innings (overnight 30-0).

M G Elliott c Tudor b Hollis 81

G S Blewett not out 169

C J Richards bow b Hollis 0

C S Lehmann c Atherton b Cork 4

S G Law c Butcher b Ramprakash 27

M G Seven not out 16

Extras (b, lb, nb) 16

Total (for 4 dec, 77 overs) 299

Fall of wickets 20, 27, 72, 276

2nd test bats 1A C Gilchrist, P R Hameel, S P Jaffer, M G Kempner, G R Robertson

Bowling Tudor 14-3-54-0; Fraser 20-5-50-0; Such 15-3-45-0; Ramprakash 11-3-33-1; Hollis 10-1-45-0; Ramprakash 6-0-29-1; Hick 1-0-3-0.

ENGLAND XI: Second innings

J P Crawley bow b Lehmann 68

M A Butcher not out 88

C J Richards c Blewett b Elliott 17

D G Cork not out 0

Extras (nb) 1

Total (for 2, 27 overs) 166

Fall of wickets 115, 164

To bats 1A Atherton, M R Ramprakash, G A Hick, 1W K Hogg, A J Tudor, A R C Fraser, P M Such

Bowling Julian 7-2-29-0; Law 9-1-38-0; Lehmann 7-1-45-1; Seven 10-1-47-0; Elliott 5-0-1-1.

Umpires S G Davies and P Parker.

London Bus Syndrome, a condition whereby a side waits hours for a wicket and then three — or on this occasion almost four — come in a rush.

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Cory Richards then came and two balls later went, leg before to Hollis, a nice irony given that on the second day the bowler himself had sat through a long partnership between Atherton and Graeme Hick, only to be dismissed first ball. Lehmann then followed,

brilliantly caught low down at first slip by Atherton as he drove at a wide ball, and had Hollis take then held a straightforward return catch immediately offered by Blewett from the next ball, four wickets would have fallen in 13 balls.

Law and Blewett then added 66 for the fourth wicket before Law missed his pull against Mark Ramprakash and skied to midwicket on the tea interval. Lehmann pulled the plug shortly afterwards.

For some days there had been rumours that Lehmann was about to supersede Ricky Ponting in the Test side, and yesterday's announcement from the Australian selectors confirmed this. It must have been a close thing, for Ponting is held in high regard and

has been part of a winning side. But scores of 21, 11, five and nought in this series have not been up to scratch. Lehmann, who had a promising series against Pakistan, was next in line and deserved his chance. Few would argue with that.

Shane Warne, though, has missed the first target date in his rehabilitation and the faintest possibility exists that, with Stuart MacGill developing apace (he has taken more wickets at smaller cost than had Warne at the equivalent stage), the finest leg-spinner of this era and probably of all time may struggle to play international cricket again.

AUSTRALIA: M Taylor, M Slater, J Langer, M Waugh, S Waugh, D Lehmann, J Hogg, D Fleming, S MacGill, J Gillespie, G McGrath, C Miller.



Stepping out... Greg Blewett strides towards his habitual century

CLIVE MASON

Glamorgan sign Kallis

JACQUES KALLIS, the South Africa all-rounder, will join Glamorgan next season. The 24-year-old has agreed a two-year contract with the county.

Glamorgan have obtained permission from the United Cricket Board of South Africa for the release of Kallis, who will link up again with his Western Province coach Duncan Fletcher.

Kallis takes the overseas place of Pakistan's fast bowler Waqar Younis, who played a major part in the 1997 Championship win but

whose 1998 season was disrupted by injury.

Glamorgan's captain Matthew Maynard said of the former Middlesex player: "It is just about the best signing we could have made. Jacques has proved in the last 18 months or so just what a good all-rounder cricketer he is, be it Test matches or one-day internationals."

With Tony Cottee and Gary Butcher having left, we have moved quickly to strengthen the side and I have no doubt at all that Jacques will make a significant impact with us."

Maynard brushed aside worries that Kallis might not be available for a large part of next season because of the World Cup.

"I'm not too concerned," he said. "We know that, even if South Africa make the final, he is going to be available to play in two-thirds of our matches, perhaps more, and such is his talent and commitment he is bound to make a massive contribution."

Glamorgan's secretary Mike Fatkin added: "We are delighted Jacques has agreed to join us for the next couple of years at least."

Gloucestershire dig in over claim that Walsh approached rivals

COURTNEY WALSH and Gloucestershire were no closer to settling their differences yesterday with the county restating their claim that the West Indies fast bowler had approached Glamorgan.

Walsh, agitated at Gloucestershire's withdrawal of their offer of a new two-year contract, has denied that he had been in contact with other counties. But Gloucestershire insist the paceman was investigating a possible move to Glamorgan.

Though the Welsh county announced yesterday the

signing of the South African Jacques Kallis as their overseas player, Gloucestershire claimed: "Glamorgan have confirmed that they were approached by [Walsh's agent] Ken Trowbridge to discuss terms for 1999."

Gloucestershire maintain that it was the possible selection of their captain Mark Alleyne for England's World Cup squad, together with the changes to the structure of domestic cricket, which made them rethink their existing offer to Walsh.

Chanderpaul in control

WEST INDIES' four-day game against South Africa A in Pietermaritzburg is heading for a draw after Shivnarine Chanderpaul took his overnight score to 182 as the tourists were dismissed for 375.

At the close of the third day South Africa A had made 188 for four in reply with the opener Sven Koenig anchoring the innings with a patient 52 from 132 balls.

Chanderpaul, 132 not out overnight out of 256 for six, was last man out having batted for 382 minutes, faced 302 balls and hit 26 fours and a

six. He was bowled by the left-arm seamer Charl Willoughby, having put on 46 for the eighth wicket with Nixon McLennan and 44 for the ninth with Franklyn Rose. Half of each of the first two days was lost to the weather.

Zimbabwe's first away-series victory came after the third and final Test against Pakistan was abandoned as a draw without a ball bowled after five days of fog in Faisalabad. Zimbabwe won the first Test at Peshawar by seven wickets and the second at Lahore was also abandoned because of fog.

A New Zealand XI overpowered an Indian XI in a limited-overs match in Durban.

The exhibition match was played on what would have been the fourth day of the abandoned first Test. New Zealand, batting first, hammered 304 for six in 50 overs and the tourists replied with 238 for eight. Venkat Laxman hitting a bold 82, to level with 66 runs.

Stephen Fleming hit 73 off 64 balls and Craig McMillan 46. The pair's stand of 95 for the fourth wicket set up the victory.

Equestrianism

Showtime for Skelton

John Kerr at Olympia

NICK SKELTON, who has been less in the limelight than usual at the Olympia Showjumping Championships in London, enjoyed success at last yesterday in the Eurosport Christmas Hamper contest on Vivaldi.

In a lively speed class, with the lead constantly changing hands, Skelton and his Olympic mare displayed the right combination of pace and accuracy to score more than a second to spare.

Prospects of a rare British one-two-three faded when Ireland's Trevor Coyle ran into

second place on Vivaldi ahead of Di Lampard on Equity.

Switzerland's Best Afandi won the P & O Events six-bar class on Gravitur by jumping four clear rounds over fences that got higher and progressively difficult. Mendil has been riding the eight-year-old, owned by the Austrian Thomas Fruhmann, for only a few weeks.

Sharing second place were Andrew Davies on Sachmo and Germany's Rene Teubel on Le Patron. Earlier Davies, 24, from California, received the Raymond Brooks-Ward Trophy, presented in memory of a man who did much to develop Olympia into a hugely popular pre-Christmas event.

It goes to the under-25 rider judged to have shown the greatest potential. Davies, who could scarcely conceal his disappointment when losing the ride on Hopes Are High to the more experienced Skelton, is the first man to receive the award since its inception in 1992.

On Sunday night Michael Whitaker landed his second success of the show on the highly promising nine-year-old Virtual Village Edition. One of only two Britons in a 13-horse barrage, he overtook Brazil's world champion Rodrigo Pessoa on Gandini Lianos by a split second for the fastest of only four clear rounds.

Motor Racing

Honda testing for Formula One return in 2000

Alan Henry

HONDA are to take a leaf out of Ferrari's book by building their own car and engine for a return to grand-prix racing. "We have now started testing a car in preparation for our participation in Formula One, probably from 2000," said Hiroyuki Yoshino, president of Honda Motors.

The development chassis was tried for the first time last week at the Vairano circuit in northern Italy where the Dutch driver Jos Verstappen put it through its paces. He is expected to continue with a full programme of development work with the chassis, manufactured by the Italian company Dallara, through 1999.

Honda originally participated in Formula One with their own car from 1964 to 1968, during which time they won two out of 35 grands prix. The company were then absent until 1984, when they resumed as an engine supplier, first to Williams and later to McLaren, Lotus and Tyrrell, providing the engines for six world championships before stepping back from the front line at the end of 1992.

Honda are establishing a new racing headquarters at Bracknell, where the former Tyrrell technical director Harvey Postlethwaite will preside over the team developing the race car.

American Football

Falcons rally for sick coach

Mark Tran in New York

THE illness of Dan Reeves, the Atlanta Falcons coach, gave the side an extra incentive and they won in style, coming from behind to beat the Detroit Lions and clinch their first NFC West title in 20 years.

Reeves was readmitted to hospital on Sunday after heart surgery. The 54-year-old, who has transformed the Falcons from perennial losers into strutting winners in just over a year, watched his team rally past the Lions with two

fourth-quarter touchdowns to win 24-17.

Reeves had assured his players last weekend that he would be back for the playoffs. The Falcons responded with an emotional performance. After their victory Eugene Robinson, the safety, yelled in front of the television cameras and microphones: "Coach, that was for you. You just rest and we'll see you for the playoffs."

The Falcons, with 15 wins and two defeats, pushed the San Francisco 49ers into second place. Reeves should return in time to replace his

assistant Rich Brooks for their first play-off game. He is expected to help with the gameplan for the finale with the Miami Dolphins.

The 49ers fell to their unaccustomed second place in the NFC West by losing 24-21 to the New England Patriots. The 49ers scored 21 points in the first half but buckled in the second as the Patriots knocked off 24 points.

The win put the Patriots into the playoffs for a wild-card spot along with the Buffalo Bills from the AFC East. Although they lost 17-10 to a resurgent New York Jets, the

Bills return to the play-offs under Doug Flutie, the veteran quarterback.

The Washington Redskins will not be heading for the play-offs after losing their first seven games. But since their disastrous start the Redskins have astonished everybody by chalking up one victory after another, winning six out of their last eight games. A victory at Dallas next Sunday would make them the first NFL team to win seven games after dropping their first seven.

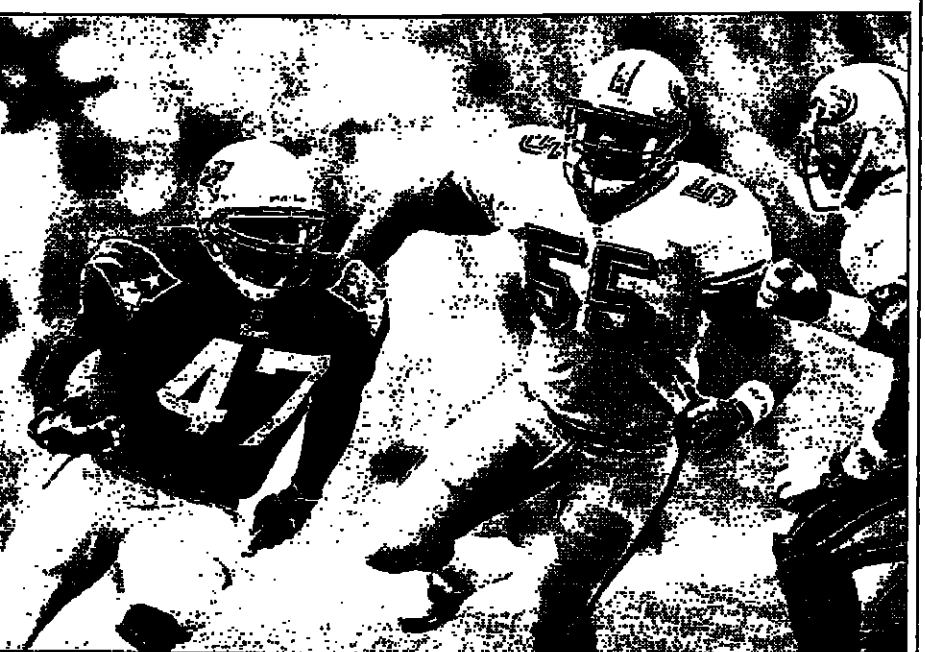
"Despite what people think, these players have worked hard," said Norv Turner, the Redskins coach. "I don't know if there is a team in the league that was down more. We had 16 games and we screwed the first part of this up, so we figured let's make the most out of it, and the effort people put in helped."

Turner may win a reprieve after fans were calling for his head earlier in the season. John Kent Cooke, the team president, appears less inclined to heed the "impeach Norv" movement.

The Minnesota Vikings continue to trample the opposition. The Vikings crushed the Jacksonville Jaguars 50-10. Randall Cunningham fractured his left (non-throwing) hand early but still threw three TD passes before being replaced. He is unlikely to miss any playing time.

Play-off qualifiers: Minnesota Vikings, Jacksonville Jaguars, Dallas Cowboys, Denver Broncos, Buffalo Bills, New England Patriots, San Francisco 49ers, New York Jets, Atlanta Falcons, Green Bay Packers.

Consolationists: Miami Dolphins, Tennessee Oilers, Arizona Cardinals, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, New York Giants.



Patriot games... Robert Edwards, left, on the charge for New England

MATTHEW STOCKMAN

Ice Hockey

Struggling Riverkings remain buoyant

Vic Batchelder

ALEX DAMPIER is quietly optimistic approaching tonight's home game against the second-placed Cardiff Devils, despite Newcastle Riverkings' lowly position and their 6-1 home defeat by Sheffield at the weekend.

"We out-chanced them and created an awful lot but didn't score enough; the puck just wouldn't go in the net," the Newcastle coach said. "Against Cardiff if we get the same number of chances and same commitment, I can see us getting the two points."

However, with Riverkings

currently one off the bottom of a league in which Cardiff have lost only three of their 16 games to date, a Newcastle victory will be a major shock.

Devils will have their forward Mike MacWilliam back from suspension while their new defenceman Derry Mcennard impressed on his debut in Saturday's 5-2 home win over Ayr.

Such mid-term recruiting is a luxury beyond Dampier and his general manager Mike O'Connor. They moved from Sheffield during the summer to take over a team now run by the Superleague while a new owner is sought for the franchise relinquished by the Newcastle Sporting Club organisation.

tion at the end of last season.

"Not having the budget to work with makes it tough. But we knew what we were getting into when we took on this outfit, so we can never use that as an excuse. We're a team that has to fight every game. Doesn't matter who we play, it's a slog."

On attendance Dampier admitted "it's been harder than expected", although he claimed Newcastle are "20 per cent up on last year and gaining ground (they now average 2,500). Last week's sellout for the upcoming games — we put 110,000 letters out — will hopefully build more on to that."

Record bids fail at Lingfield, page 13

Blewett makes England suffer, page 15

Fifa threat to home nations, page 14

Kallis signs for Glamorgan, page 15

SportsGuardian

Austria sweep the board



The Herminator is back... Hermann Maier followed in the tracks of his hero Franz Klammer by leading a record Austrian sweep of the top nine places in a World Cup super-G in Innsbruck yesterday. It was the first major race held on the Patscherkofel slope since the Austrian Klammer's downhill run for Olympic gold in 1976. Skiing, sport in brief, page 23

Simple need to be one of the Bhoys



Jim White

FOR a moment it looked like the most intriguing ticket since Ken Clarke joined forces with John Redwood in an attempt to keep the Conservative Party leadership in the hands of a man with a full head of hair.

Jim Kerr, the musician who loves the game so much he became a pomp rocker simply so that he could play in the biggest football stadiums of the world, and Kenny Dalglish, currently at a loose end now that his BT obligations have been fulfilled, had formed a consortium hoping to buy Celtic.

Even more excitingly for any Celts with a fondness for loud rock with deep and meaningless lyrics, Bono of U2 had pledged his support. If only Fish, once of Marillion, could have been persuaded on board, the team of Celtic bombasta would have been unstoppable.

Celtic's majority shareholder Fergus McCann, however, clearly prefers the volume control on his music centre well down. Over the weekend he dismissed Kerr's consortium with a curt statement about how theirs was not a serious bid, that the finance behind it was inadequate and that he was not prepared to waste time on it any more.

Such was the tone of contempt ringing from every sentence it would have been no surprise if McCann had added that he had always preferred Simply Red anyway.

For Kerr, this must have been more than frustrating, as his consortium had yet to table a formal bid. Moreover, the only reason he had formed his partnership with Dalglish in the first place was because McCann had publicly expressed his desire to sell: this was not a predatory takeover but a response to a widely publicised request. For McCann apparently to throw out the only bid he has received without even talking through the details seems quibbolic to say the least.

"Realistically this is the last chance for the club to be taken over by those with the fans' interests at heart," Kerr said when interviewed last week for Radio 5's Dream

Team (when, naturally, he was selecting a side full of his favourite Rangers players). "I honestly think he [McCann] is disappointed that we haven't smoked out a rival bid yet."

There is something in this prognosis. It is inconceivable that McCann has watched developments in football finance over the past three months and not been intrigued. The autumnal flurry of interest in leading clubs by media groups with deep pockets has been put on hold only by the referral of Sky's bid for Manchester United to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

If that purchase is cleared in March, then Newcastle will not be alone in following the trend. With the potential of being the biggest club in Scotland and Ireland, Celtic seem ideally placed to be caught up in the inflationary spiral created by those seeking to get their hands on television rights.

Compared to that sort of purchaser, Kerr's bid is an old-fashioned one. The Glasgow boy made good, the fan who wants to show love of his club by buying something rather more substantial than a season ticket, he is but a sophisticated update of the butcher who buys his local football club.

Kerr's motives are transparent: he wants to see Celtic re-established as a leading European player. And, judging by the way he talks about his club, one gets the feeling he would not mind if his bank balance went west in the process.

THE other week, for instance, before the last Old Firm game, it was clear that if Celtic lost, and slipped 13 points behind Rangers, McCann's position would be sufficiently weakened that he might be prepared to take any bid, even one he held in contempt.

"For a moment I was in a dilemma," Kerr says. "I realised it would be in my interests if my club lost."

It did not last long. Since Celtic's huge victory, at Simple Minds soundchecks instead of trotting the traditional "one-two, one-two" mantra beloved of rock roadies everywhere, Kerr has started using "five-one".

Asked to choose between an owner who thinks like that and one who talks about football as being the core business of his new asset, fans would be unanimous in their selection. But, if there is one lesson we can take from British football in 1998, it is this: what the fans want is the last thing that matters.

Bath sights on Hill and Cooke

Robert Armstrong says Robinson's job is under threat from two former colleagues

GLoucester's Richard Hill and the former England manager Geoff Cooke are the favourites to take over from the beleaguered Bath coach Andy Robinson, who is under internal pressure to resign.

The former Bath teammates Hill and Robinson will be coaching rivals in the West Country derby at Kingsholm on Saturday week, a game Bath must win if their coach is to gain an 11th-hour reprieve.

Hill, a former captain of Bath and England, has been targeted by directors, committee men and members as the man to halt the club's dramatic decline. Last weekend's home defeat by Saracens was their fifth successive reverse, their worst run in more than a decade of league rugby.

The 57-year-old Cooke also has his advocates, particu-

larly among those staff and supporters who want to see a return to strong management in the Jack Rowell style.

"There are two schools of opinion here about the best way forward in the event of Andy stepping down," said a

long-standing club official yesterday. "Many people believe Hill has the knowledge and the ability to restore the old Bath family ethos which has virtually disappeared."

"But an influential minority, including some recent ex-players, would prefer to make a clean break with the past in the best interests of the club, which is where Cooke, who has no Bath baggage to worry

about, could come into the equation."

Last Saturday Robinson insisted that he was not about to resign, possibly for the good reason that he could hardly expect a substantial pay-off if he tore up his own contract.

Nevertheless, it seems that the patience of the Bath owner Andrew Brownword has reached breaking point. Two years ago, when he sacked Jon Hill as director of rugby, Bath's league record was not as mediocre as now.

Whether the 37-year-old Hill, regarded as the most progressive coach in the country and tipped as a future England coach, would be willing to walk out on Gloucester, where he has enjoyed three happy years, is an intriguing question in the light of his past loyalty to Bath.

Cooke, who gave Bath players such as Jeremy Guscott and Phil de Glanville their first caps, is a free agent and also one of the few professional coaches in England with a proven record of suc-

cess. He guided Bedford to promotion from Premiership Two last season but resigned two weeks ago because of the club's cash-flow problems.

This time last year Robinson was similarly under threat but he laid the doubts to rest, at least temporarily, by taking Bath to a European Cup triumph at the expense of the holders Brive. This season, though, the game's administrators have denied Bath the chance to defend that European crown.

Some welcome good news for Bath last night was that Andy Nicol, their scrum-half who tore a medial ligament last Saturday, said he should return in February. It was feared he would miss the rest of the season.

Robinson's Bath coaching records in Premiership, Eastern by Leicester in sixth round of Pilkington Cup; Robinson's league record: Won 8, lost 2, drew 1.

1997-98: European champions (beat Brive 18-15 in final in Bordeaux). Finished third in Premiership. Season by Richmond in fifth round of Today's Cup. League record: Won 12, lost 5.

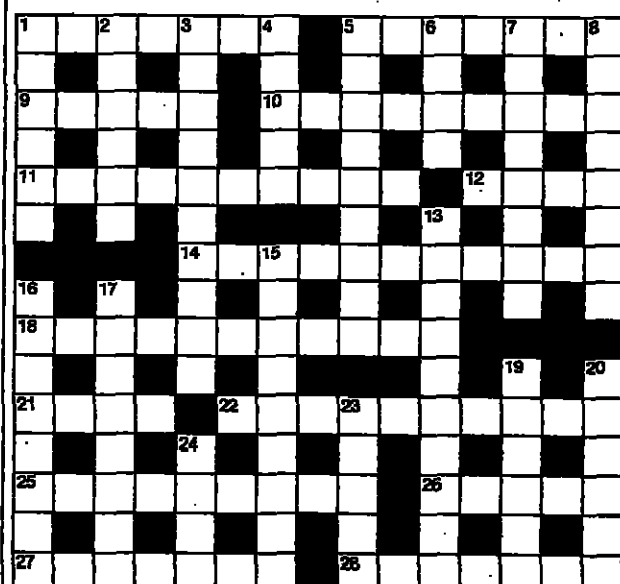
1998-99: League record: Currently 10th, Won 7, lost 6.



In demand... the coaches Richard Hill and Geoff Cooke

Guardian Crossword No 21,464

Set by Plodge



Across

1 Got up? (7)

5 Saw one type of ale absorbing pub turnover (7)

9 Carp at stoker taking English (5)

10 Made swell FBI agents infiltrate at due process (9)

11 Early sage isn't commonly a herb revered in Moscow (5,5)

12 It's grim to be a busy person, they say (4)

14 Ruddy Miss Lee answered back! (4,7)

18 Adjust picture even when blinkered? (11)

21 Proper bishop dismissed a fellow ecclesiastic (4)

22 Severely gruesome environment for the endlessly devout (10)

25 I went out with sister and was overwhelmed (6)

28 Presume interference without Rattigan's letters? (5)

27 The 'd' of Cupid is particularly welcome (7)

23 Squirmed, having left wearing a hairpiece (7)

Down

1 Adulterate drugs Lincoln first dredged up (6)

2 Time off in the city? It makes me sick (6)

3 Short Saracen captured filer to get Greek island (10)

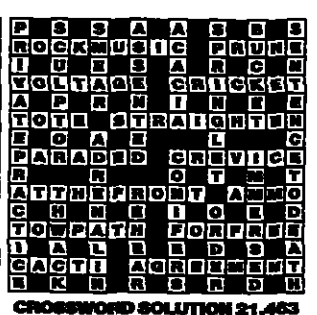
4 Tot with an ace to play (5)

6 Tentatively clip a short cigar found at the opera (9)

8 Was sorry to have sounded cheeky (4)

7 Rear pot up on the Stock Exchange? (5)

8 Cunning Dole entertained little Miss Wordsworth in



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,463

surroundings of great wealth (8)

13 God-given pole designed for building (10)

15 United no longer content to accept rising violation (9)

16 Joking parish priest ousted abbot in giving up (8)

17 Put forward for some cash? (8)

19 Handy to have in a house fully-furnished (6)

20 Cross at leaving birthday bash? (6)

23 Settle on two points up on the index (5)

24 It's used for shaping puffs, say (4)

Solution tomorrow

27 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 338 338. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATS

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made from 100% waste material for UK newspapers in 1997

CE APPROP



The Bertelsmann employees were indeed arrested, but for corruptly acquiring scarce paper supplied rather than for their principled stand against a repellent regime. Indeed the employees were freed when one of Bertelsmann's authors asked Goebbels to intervene.

Embarrassing questions surrounding the past of the world's third largest media group

G2 cover story

1.52 من المجلد

Television and radio

The weather in Europe

Shadow of shame

but then an overload reporter for a Swiss magazine uncovered something that Berlethmann would have preferred kept out of the public domain: the company which had long ago been absorbed of any collusion with the National Socialist regime in Germany – indeed, it claimed to have been closed down by the Nazis and its directors imprisoned – had some titles in its back catalogue. It was not overtaken to publish: 'Take Dr Martin Luther's Little Catechism For This Man in Brown, a handy guide for the budding Brownist, or between The Varina and The Volga, a romantic study aligning the massacre

obscene industrial giants (Krupp, IG Farben) as well as the financial sector (Deutsche Bank) have all found themselves accused of doing more than their bit to help the Third Reich. Suddenly, Germany's corporate giants are being called on to give clients and more detailed accounts of their wartime histories than ever before. And this is no aid historical exercise as companies such as Berlethmann look to US markets to maintain the rhythm of expansion, they are increasingly vulnerable to the demands of those who doubt the veracity and the independence of the accounts of their wartime records,

economy and therefore the government, as legal successor to the Third Reich, should shoulder the blame. Berlethmann chairman Thoman Middehoff, who took over in November this year, moved with flying feet with the allegations during the Nazi era there were some titles published by Berlethmann which were not consistent with our values,' said Middehoff. (6) Following the publication of the allegations in the American magazine 'The Nation' "These books were not at all representative of the thousands of books published by Berlethmann during that time, and we find their

the U.S., Berdeman bought Reed Elsevier's share in Book Club Associates and now controls 40 British book clubs. The worldwide turnover from its book-related activities is around £2.5 billion. In music, its BMG group owns RCA Records, one of the big five music groups, and it has expressed interest in another, EMI. In Germany, Berdeman owns the mass-circulation Stern, a left-liberal news magazine and has 52 per cent stake in Der Spiegel, the bible of Ger-

America Online and extensive television interests, including pay-TV. Commercially speaking, Berdeman is a very healthy company. Monthly too, the company has been keen to pronounce itself in the midst of health. A corporate history prepared for its 50th anniversary in 1985 maintained that Berdeman was shut down by the Nazis in 1943 because of flaunted Moltke religious convictions. Its official website expounded on the theme: "Berdeman employees are arrested by the Nazis under a pretext and imprisoned without legal proceedings. Shortly

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Judge Institute of Management Studies

Charterhouse PhD Studentships in Finance and Accounting

Following a generous donation from the Charterhouse Trust, The Judge Institute of Management Studies is offering one PhD research studentship, Finance.

A topic in the area(s) of stock market behaviour in the UK or US, applied corporate finance or emerging markets finance, to be supervised by Dr Graham Osbourne.

The student will spend two years undertaking research in the field of capital structure, corporate hedging and default, to be supervised by Dr David Lamberton.

Required qualifications: Excellent first degree, ideally with further academic training for work experience in accounting, finance or economics.

The studentship will be granted for a three year period, commencing October 1999, and will cover University and College fees, plus an allowance for living expenses. The deadline for applications is 1 March 1999. Short-listed candidates may be invited for interview.

Further details and application forms: The Secretary, The Judge Institute of Management Studies, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1AQ, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1223 338900 Fax: +44 (0)1223 338910 E-mail: enquires@jims.cam.ac.uk Web: <http://www.jim.cam.ac.uk/mcas/char.htm>

Accounting:
A topic in the area(s) of financial reporting, financial institutions and share price determination, to be supervised by Dr Richard Barker.
Required qualifications: Excellent first degree, ideally with further academic training for work experience in accounting, finance or economics.

To mark the end of the second millennium, the Guardian's website is conducting a worldwide tour of 1,000 years of world history. Here are this week's highlights



Day 119: 1286-1287

Henry III, now 26, married 19-year-old Margaret of Provence, whose sister Margaret was already married to Louis IX of France. Greeted by 300 knights, the wedding was a rich spectacle. Henry's first project was to establish a leprosy house at the Tower of London.

Day 120: 1288-1289

The Mongol armies, nicknamed the Golden Horde, were advancing steadily through Russia, striking terror into European hearts. Battle between the Golden Horde and the Russian army took place at the Battle of Kulikovo.

Day 121: 1240-1241

The famous Mongol warriors of the Golden Horde were superb archers, riding like the wind on their swift ponies. One of their less charming habits was to cut off the ears of their slain enemies, as trophies. At the Battle of Legnica they collected nine sacks worth.

Day 122: 1242-1243

After an ill-advised foray into Poland, Henry III was left with Gascony as his only Continental foothold. The feeble King then defaulted on forced loans, and his barons refused to back more taxes. Henry's brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort, proved a rare friend.

Day 123: 1244-1245

Henry III, the most monarch, rather fancied himself as a patron of splendid architecture and decided to rebuild Westminster Abbey (founded, Henry de Beves, his French-trained architect, used the Gothic style then in fashion).

Day 124: 1246-1247

Europe at this time was afflicted by periodic outbreaks of mass hysteria and religious frenzy. One of the victims was about 12-year-old William of Norwich, a child of a noble family. He was accused of being a heretic - Robert Bruce of Arundale.

Day 125: 1248-1249

After Alexander III's death, the new King of Scotland was seven-year-old Alexander III, but before the child's birth Alexander III had recognised one of his principal Anglo-Norman barons as his heir - Robert Bruce of Arundale.

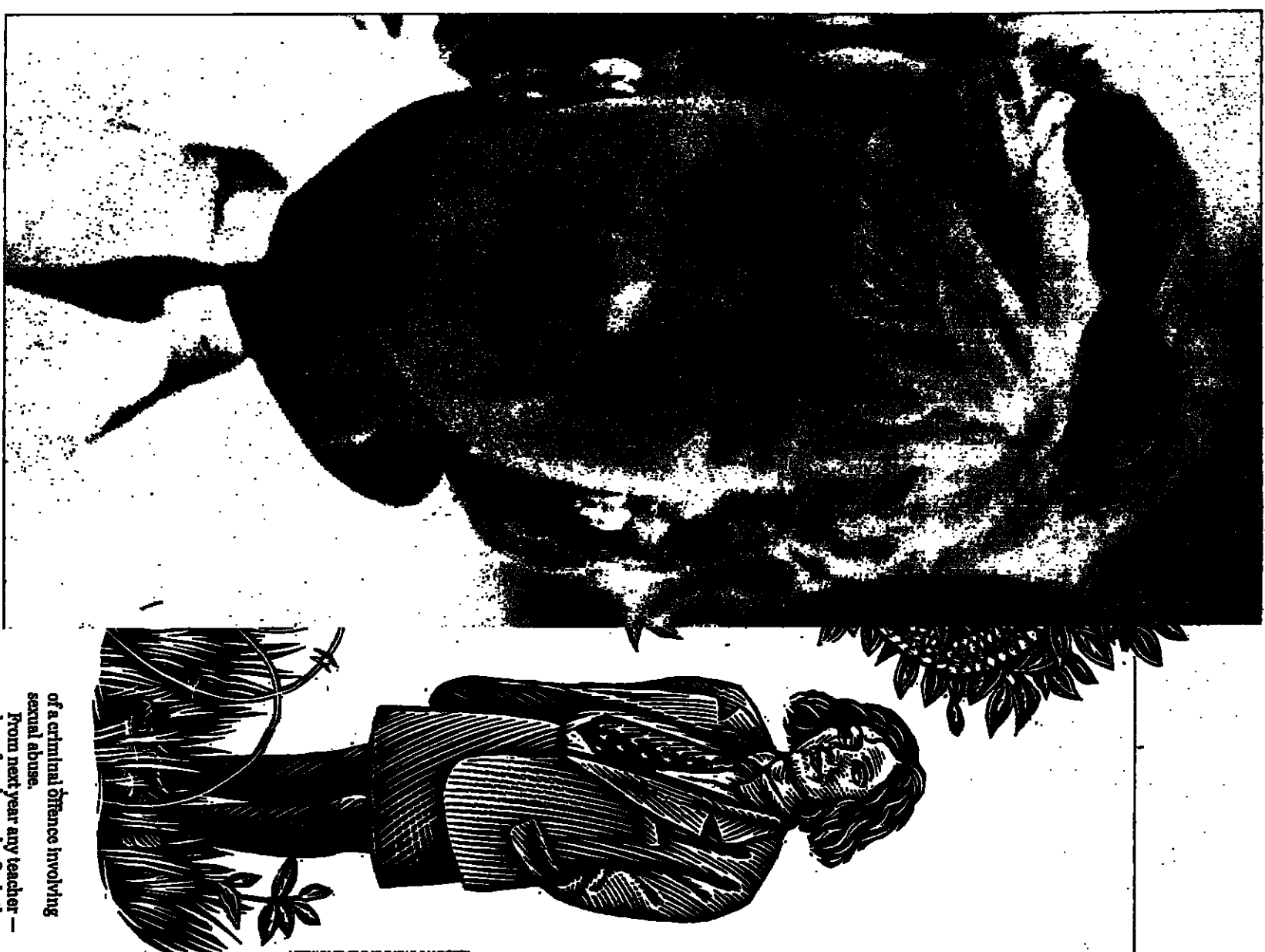
Read the full report daily at www.guardian.co.uk/1000years

He was Diana's 'rock', working for her even after her death. Now her former butler has been sacked from the Memorial Fund. Why does the establishment want him out, asks Gary Younge

What the butler saw

Like the late boss to whom he pledged unflinching loyalty, Paul Burrell has worked "to go out" for the Princess Diana's Memorial Fund. Why does the establishment want him out, asks Gary Younge

Paul Burrell, the former butler of the late Princess Diana, is being sacked from his job as a fundraiser for the Diana Memorial Fund. The Princess's former butler, the man she described as a "rock", the person she was said to be closest to during her final days, the one person close to her she said she trusted, has been sacked from his job as a fundraiser for the Diana Memorial Fund. The Princess's former butler, the man she described as a "rock", the person she was said to be closest to during her final days, the one person close to her she said she trusted, has been sacked from his job as a fundraiser for the Diana Memorial Fund.



A Princess's trust... Diana and Paul Burrell, sacked from his job as a fundraiser for the Diana Memorial Fund. Photograph: Tim Rock

position in the charity so difficult. "Trying to fit somebody who has touched the nation into a normal working structure is not easy. Fundraising is not simply the job of an enthusiastic person these days. Burrell was told two weeks ago by Diana's sister, Lady Sarah McCorquodale, and her former solicitor, Anthony Julius, that his job would soon be gone. Rumours of his sacking, snowballed. But Burrell's dismissal, the fund insisted, had been greatly exaggerated.

"The fact of the matter is that Paul Burrell is a valued employee of the fund and there is no suggestion that he has been, or will be, sacked. A spokeswoman said just over a week ago, following reports in Sunday newspapers that he had already been fired. "They admitted that Burrell's role was being 'redefined', but didn't elaborate on what that meant.

The spin went all one-way. Throughout last week Burrell, 40, maintained a business-as-usual attitude, turning up for work while letting it be known through "friends" that he was unhappy at the direction in which the fund was going. "Paul is not happy and will not go without a fight, but he will show his defiance with respect," said one acquaintance. A story was leaked about the fund spending £12,000 to send two of its directors to America on Concordia.

Burrell was used to a working environment where if things didn't go your way you picked up the phone and called a national newspaper. That's how things worked in Kensington Palace. But you can't do that with a charity, said a fund insider.

On the other hand, Burrell, who was the fund's chief executive, once the Archbishop of Canterbury's right-hand man, who knew the Princess only as an icon from news bulletins and photographs. The two men represented not only different sides of the class divide but opposing approaches as to how Diana's legacy should be commemorated.

One of Burrell's friends, who objected to the treatment meted out to him by the fund's staff, said: "It is like having a sabbatical being told by a bunch of strangers that you don't know what you are talking about."

A source within the fund argued that it is precisely Burrell's desire to elevate himself as the authentic heir to Diana's legacy which made his

matter what I still feel I'm working for one person, the same person. Those at the fund felt he should have been working more closely with the butler. Started to be ridiculed within the organisation. One of the troubles is reported to have told him: "The trouble with you, Paul, is that you are an emotional cripple."

Insiders also argued that the lack of experience left him ill-equipped for the role he had cast himself within the organisation. His background as a butler had developed different qualities. He had no line management skills. He could not be described as the best team player" said one. "They tried to send him on courses and find him new roles but he wasn't interested."

But Burrell already had a profile which was broader and far more popular than any of the fund's trustees. He had worked Hollywood during a £300-a-head dinner to commemorate the Princess in March. Stars including Jane Seymour were in tears during his five-minute speech about Diana's work.

What is the true benchmark of literary greatness? The Booker Prize? Hardly. Most of us would be struggling to name the last five winners, and you can't imagine anyone - the judges included - having read Ker Egan's 1985 prize-winning *Bone People* without lapsing into a coma.

No disrespect to Jan McEwan at all, but if you're talking real genius then you have to be thinking Chaucer, Shakespeare, Austen, Dickens and Eliot. And where can you be guaranteed to find all these writers? On the GCSE and A-level English syllabus.

So understandably - in common with every other writer, I imagine - I've been keeping a beady eye on the English curriculum for a few years now to see when I was going to figure out it. And I'm pleased to say that any time has come.

On June 2 this year, a Tuesday I believe, between 1.30 and 3.30 in the afternoon, those attending the GCSE English Paper 1 (The H (for Higher, obviously) set by the Northern Examination and Assessment Board were lucky enough to come across your truly. Question 1, which was meant to take an hour - but probably took most people a great deal longer - required the examinees to analyse and compare part of an article of mine on homelessness that had first been published in this newspaper, and an extract from George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*.

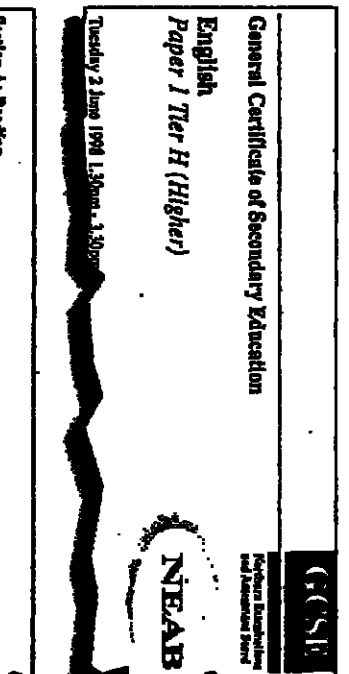
Now I can't speak for George and his rather ordinary effort, but I have reckoned that my homelessness article was the most brilliant piece I had ever written. It was clear, concise and contained the odd sparkling alliteration - "childless couples" comes home daily to mind - and was self-critically aware of anything that anyone else had ever published. OK, I fully accept that I was the one in the wrong. She was so suspicious, so concerned that there wouldn't be any problems for the school. It felt like a witch-hunt, as if the accusation was so heinous that everyone automatically believed the accuser. And he knew he knew he had something over me."

When **John Grace** wrote on homelessness for the Guardian, little did he expect his article to grace a GCSE exam paper and be compared to the writings of George Orwell. Setting modesty aside, he goes one step beyond...

By George, it's top marks for a genius



Prose master John Grace (left) couldn't speak for George Orwell (right) and his "rather ordinary effort", but was moderately happy with his "rather brilliant piece"



one hand this, on the other hand that Grace's article for once there is a categorical right and wrong. "I assume that you need no help with part A of the question - what sorts of people are most likely to find themselves homeless and what has been done to tackle the problems of homelessness since the 1980s? - as it's a matter of simple comprehension. Part B can be simply ignored as it's a few stray questions about Orwell.

at's much more interesting. Question What are the writers (Grace and Orwell) setting out to do? Answer: Make a living. Question How do Grace and Orwell present their information. Answer: Grace - very well indeed. Orwell - much too long-winded.

Question: How do Grace and Orwell use language? Answer: Grace has the confidence to be direct. Orwell feels he has to come on all the while and loses any sense of immediacy. Question: How successful are Grace and Orwell? Answer: Grace is very successful. Orwell tries hard but could do better.

There, I've given my all. I know it's more than most of you deserve, but I feel I now have a duty to share my genius. But now I must lie down and rest.

journalism is too profound and complex for the minds of the average 15 or 16-year-old and has to be restricted to the English A-level syllabus. And as for my bookies, they are strictly for post-graduate students.

Even that the NEAB must have initially despised of new findings something of mine. I can only imagine how they might have reacted when one of their highly-paid researchers found something suitable in the Grace article. OK, I fully accept that I was the one in the wrong. She was so suspicious, so concerned that there wouldn't be any problems for the school. It felt like a witch-hunt, as if the accusation was so heinous that everyone automatically believed the accuser. And he knew he knew he had something over me."

managed to infiltrate his way on to the exam paper. It's such a shame he's dead. I would have loved to let him know how much of this success he owed to me. Now to the bit you must all have been waiting for: it's comparison time for a living writer to feature in an English exam, and so most students only ever get to hear the interpretations of their teachers or other academics. But I can give you the definitive authorial view - the model answer. Forget the wily wily "on the one hand this, on the other hand that" Grace's article for once there is a categorical right and wrong. "I assume that you need no help with part A of the question - what sorts of people are most likely to find themselves homeless and what has been done to tackle the problems of homelessness since the 1980s? - as it's a matter of simple comprehension. Part B can be simply ignored as it's a few stray questions about Orwell.

at's much more interesting. Question What are the writers (Grace and Orwell) setting out to do? Answer: Make a living. Question How do Grace and Orwell present their information. Answer: Grace - very well indeed. Orwell - much too long-winded.

Question: How do Grace and Orwell use language? Answer: Grace has the confidence to be direct. Orwell feels he has to come on all the while and loses any sense of immediacy. Question: How successful are Grace and Orwell? Answer: Grace is very successful. Orwell tries hard but could do better.

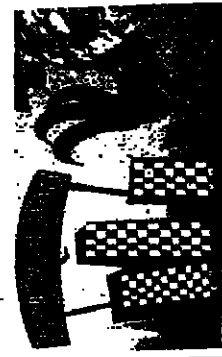
There, I've given my all. I know it's more than most of you deserve, but I feel I now have a duty to share my genius. But now I must lie down and rest.

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Education



Woodhead beaten but not bowed

Guardian debate: Sparks flew in last week's battle over teacher training, says Rebecca Smithers

The Chief Inspector of Schools, Chris Woodhead, bravely stepped back into the line of fire for the latest Guardian/Institute of Education debate last Wednesday.

Opposing the motion that "effective education in schools needs universities to provide independent research and teacher education", before an audience stuffed with academics, he was not among his best friends. Yet he won many brownie points from his critics for daring to challenge entrenched views, while failing to be put off by unnecessary heckling from a small contingent.

Proposing the motion, a confident Professor Richard Pring of Oxford University began by saying that the on-quoted remark attributed to him in 1996 — "much of the educational bookshelves are covered in the kind of dross which a decade ago would never have been the light of day" — was actually written by his wife.

Opposing the motion, Chris Woodhead pointed out that in many areas he agreed with Professor Pring. For example, universities did have a crucial role to play in a democratic society. Yet while some educational research was of a high quality, "too much is irrelevant, politically or pedagogically partisan, and/or methodologically suspect".

But he upset more sensitive academics by stressing his view that teachers would be better off trained in classrooms rather than in university lecture halls. The controversial school training scheme, the School of Education, was a result of a central initial teacher training (ITT) scheme.

That usually means sackings or enforced resignations. It is not uncommon in Britain and it doesn't just happen to male teachers. Last month the Times Educational Supplement carried the story of Sharon Rodgers, former teacher of English at a Catholic secondary school, who went to an industrial tribunal to claim unfair dismissal after she was obliged to resign from her job. "I have done nothing wrong except fall in love," Rodgers stated of the affair with one of her 17-year-old pupils. She lost her appeal, however, roundly blaming sexual discrimination and the

Crimes of the heart

The fate of any teacher who gets involved with a pupil under the age of 19 could be dire if new government legislation takes effect. For some caught up in an affair, there may be no way out. **Adrian Mourby** reports

A 23-year-old man strikes up a relationship with an 18-year-old woman whom he meets at a party. The place is Britain, the time is now and both are unmarried. Their story seems unremarkable except for the fact that he may lose his job as a result of this affair. Next year he could even be prosecuted if new government legislation takes effect.

The reason, of course, is that the man in question is a teacher and teachers are subject to codes of conduct that do not affect the rest of us.

Margaret Glenworth is a solicitor with the education specialists Everheds who advise on child protection matters. "The issue here, interestingly, is whether it is 'appropriate' rather than 'illegal' for a teacher to have relations with a pupil who is over 16. The view of the Department of Education and Employment is that schools have a role in child protection and so disciplinary action should be taken."

"Disciplinary action" — a term that usually means sackings or enforced resignations. It is not uncommon in Britain and it doesn't just happen to male teachers. Last month the Times Educational Supplement carried the story of Sharon Rodgers, former teacher of English at a Catholic secondary school, who went to an industrial tribunal to claim unfair dismissal after she was obliged to resign from her job. "I have done nothing wrong except fall in love," Rodgers stated of the affair with one of her 17-year-old pupils. She lost her appeal, however, roundly blaming sexual discrimination and the

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I met earlier this week. "This staffroom is divided down the middle," said one teacher [from one of the two schools]. "Some women here just take the view that it's wrong, like we're here in only six or seven years. But there are others who have definitely been involved. They've been very careful about talking about it, but I do know of at least two affairs that were happening last year."



become involved with pupils aged 16 and over. Although the Home Office is intent on liberalising gay relationships, it drags out one group in society, known as 'careworkers', for whom it will be illegal to have a sexual relationship with anyone under 19, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Because teachers fall into the category of careworkers, this means that another Shalton Rodgers in 1999 might find herself prosecuted as well as dismissed from her job.

Doug McAvoy of the National Union of Teachers is concerned about this new development. "The proposed legislation is concerned with the need to protect the professional, caring relationship that should exist between young people and those in authority over them, and the NUT has emphasised in its Code of Ethics that such relationships are improper... [but]... the new law must be reasonable."

"It must be confined to relations with a pupil in the teacher's own school. Otherwise teachers are likely to be subject to a new criminal offence that will not apply to other adults in the community."

None of which has calmed the atmosphere amongst those women involved in the two affairs who are the subject of the book. "I know of two affairs that were happening last year," said one teacher. "Some women here just take the view that it's wrong, like we're here in only six or seven years. But there are others who have definitely been involved. They've been very careful about talking about it, but I do know of at least two affairs that were happening last year."

It's not surprising that the book has caused such a stir. "I just kept thinking how surreal it was. Here I was in some of them very mature, and those boys are coming out to their teachers, well, it's not surprising some of them can't resist. After all, if you meet this young man at a disco you wouldn't have second thoughts. They're of age and it's not against the law. God help us if it ever is."

The fate of any teacher who does get involved with a pupil under the age of 19 could be dire if the new government legislation goes forward. List 99 is a government-administered roll-call of barred teachers. Inclusion on that list is virtually automatic for a teacher who is convicted of a sexual offence.



Rod Stewart invited him to dance with his wife, the model Rachel Hunter. Angela Lansbury said he was "an extraordinary human being". Elizabeth Taylor, who was too ill to make the dinner, invited him to her house to watch the Oscars. He made frequent appearances in both OK and Hello magazines.

At times he appeared star-struck. "I just kept thinking how surreal it was. Here I was in some of them very mature, and those boys are coming out to their teachers, well, it's not surprising some of them can't resist. After all, if you meet this young man at a disco you wouldn't have second thoughts. They're of age and it's not against the law. God help us if it ever is."

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Column inches
Armando Iannucci

Putting 1998's pundits on the critical list

Once again it's time to ask particularly revered members of the public will themselves be buying a Leonardo di Caprio Yearpinner. The one by Boreas Yal Publishing is excellent, with a separate photo of the creature for each month of the year. There's also useful info on di Caprio's anniversary dates, such as February 19 (stopped dating Winona Ryder). Mmmmm!

Richard Rogers (Cig architect). Lolita Toot's Little Book of Feng Shui is a conveniently sized compendium of interior design-based spirituality. It's also quite readily locatable in most bookshops, since you can generally find it in small places on the shelves (this is possible by an optimum position arrived at by applying Feng Shui's eastern-based philosophy of spiritual positioning to itself, thus demonstrating its own integrity as an artefact). Great tips on where to hang mussels.

Will Hutton (Interested in eco-nomies). This year, I've been particularly interested in the politics of personality and its effect on the debate on nationalism, which is why my choice for 1998 has to be My Autobiography by Teddy Sherrington. Excellent boot-room dirt on Freddie.

Tom Paulin (television poet and critic). I've been really impressed by the marketing campaign for a new novel called Girls On The Razz or something like that. Anyway, the book line on the display is 'A Bride-Remains, underpinned by its own ineffable logic. One thinks of Mervyn Peake. Fuck off!

A 58 (important writer). A year of temptations upheaval in the elements. Hurricanes lashed the planet in winter, fog sat on the South East of Asia all summer, but it was James Cameron's Titanic that was Friday headlines. All the restaurants were full. Groups of eight or 38 were out having office lunches. The atmosphere was merry and festive. The weather was a little of 140, but not too hot. A little of 140, but not too hot. A little of 140, but not too hot.

On the other hand there are those, like Lady Sarah McCorquodale, who believe it should stick to donations and commercial sponsorship, on the grounds that the money was drying up and cash being diverted from existing charities. Burrell aided emotionally with the first. But it was those who sought to push the sponsorship role who won through in the end.

The firing of Burrell does little to ease these tensions but could paradoxically put the fund in the same position as the royal family when it froze out Diana — fighting the public perception that it is out of touch while squandering the huge pool of goodwill without which it cannot possibly exist.

A Christmas tale of two booksellers

Sometimes, the spirit of Christmas is captured in a beautiful way. Then it's not so much a paper hat and a red Christmas cracker by their plates, and realised the ceaseless mayhem of the country's churches, and one such moment was observed just before the weekend.

The two men, I gathered from the proprietors, were the owner and assistant of a small bookshop. As they gossiped over their turkey and trimmings, the owner tapped the glass with a pen, called for silence from his bombastic, was a table of 140, but not too hot. A little of 140, but not too hot. A little of 140, but not too hot.

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Arts

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Millions of priceless pictures sold off for a pittance. Sound familiar?

Peter Lennon on a new drama that has pricked the BBC's conscience

It is not often that photographs, the very DNA of film-making, are used as weapons. In a TV drama, Stephen Pollakoff has done so in *Shooting The Past*, a three-part series that starts in the New Year on a quiet day in a way quite different from the cliché of cops touring a city with their dogs.

Shooting The Past tells the story of an American foundation that buys an old-style British photographic library with the intention of converting the building into a business school. The idea is to destroy 10 million prints, retaining only a handful of fashionably valuable stills for posterity.

But the employees refuse to give up without a fight. To these true lovers of photography, a picture of an anonymous man is just as valuable as a Man Ray. Agony or a Mapplethorpe. Lily. With just one week to fight back, they use the seductive power of the still photograph to fend off the filleting and destruction of their collection.

Timothy Spall plays Oswald — the kind of employee we've all worked with, so respected for his knowledge and expertise that his bossiness is worth putting up with — who comes up with a single snapshot of the new proprietor's mother and deals up a disturbing family history going back three generations. Will this stop the crew from this barbarian tracks?



The story can certainly be read as a massive broadside against institutions like the BBC, capable of trampling over anything whose value cannot be instantly measured in cash. And the BBC is bound to feel a particular pang of conscience since, in 1968, the power of the camera was used to film a non-Duchamp photograph collection for a modest sum to a cable entrepreneur. It was then sold on to Mark Getty in 1968. Now, by delicious irony, this BBC production had to buy photographs from the Hulton-Getty Picture Collection to make the serial.

And when you talk to the filmmakers you are left in no doubt about their motives. "The idea did not come

here — not to make lots of money or to go up the ladder. I used work in the BBC's gran-

phone library. There was the same problem. It was probably the best sound library in the world, but it was

restructured three or four times — sealed down. Lots of the old people have now gone. Again, when people leave the company has not been able to capture their knowledge, expertise and information. It is not the sort of thing you can put on computers."

John Hammond, producer of *Shooting The Past*, also worked in the BBC in the eighties with Michael Wearing (Jojo from *The Blacklist*). Our friends in the North, *Shooting The Past* deals with the loss of people who are able to make connections between things. Hammond said: "People who have incredible, vivid imaginations and are a part of knowledge. Such people don't fit in anymore. A lot of people I admired highly when I joined the BBC have gone freelance or retired because there was an ethos then to which everybody worked which does not exist now. It has been discarded for the good of accountability. Yes, I know the BBC had to reform, but there was the sense that the baby went out with the bath water."

"The heart of the story," Pollakoff said, "is about human beings with that extra way of making illogical leaps that computers are not very good at making. I passionately believe that all over the world, a lot of these people have gone — those whose knowledge was priceless, but who were very difficult or very unproductive of work patterns. There is a whole sense of panic in the world because everything is moving so fast and managements have to justify their positions. Then there are the Oswalds of this world — people with their own methods, imperceptible to the outside world."

Altogether, newspapers make extraordinary mistakes which I am sure did not happen in the past. I am not talking about Guardian misprints; mistakes are made in terms of knowledge which would not have happened 10 or 15 years ago, and that's because good knowledge of the recent past is no longer something you are absolutely expected to have. It is not very cool to have it."

With the script written and filming about to start, the *Shooting The Past* crew turned to the Hulton-Getty Picture Collection for photographic material with which to construct their visual plots. And they found there, exactly the kind of character who could have inspired the part of Oswald in their own story. The general manager, Matthew Burton, is a former BBC employee currently overseeing a collection of 15 million prints. Just like Oswald, Burton is reputed to know precisely which box a negative is in without having to even think about it.

So how did he do it? He did it by the way of the collection from the BBC, by way of a cable TV entrepreneur. It was then sold on to Mark Getty in 1968. Now, by delicious irony, this BBC production had to buy photographs from the Hulton-Getty Picture Collection to make the serial.

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Spall (above) plays one of those key but bolshie people that managements love to hate

The superman, some orchestral conductors have learnt the art of the character change. They swirl round on the podium to talk listeners through unfamiliar music, switching in a semi-querulous slide-heating gesture to audience-friendly guide. Leonard Slatkin, the American conductor, currently running the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, is a wizard at it. His understated remark at engaging the public has now won him a prize-hunt programme on Radio 3 this Christmas. The hour-long evening show, *Discovering Music With Leonard Slatkin*, is, he explains, "the MTV for the radio."

Anthony Hopkins, the British composer and conductor who for years commanded a weekly talking about-music slot on Radio 3, was a fiercely scolding voice, but he sounded as if he sang kept the the on. And if memory serves, he never reversed from being to say the Frank Sinatra and James New.



As Slatkin says it, we are all descended by the personality of music and therefore take it for granted. This struck him during a concert series he gave in the States a couple of years ago, in which he spent the first half of each programme filling pieces and playing excerpts for the audience, and the second half performing the works in full. One concert featured Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, and he kicked off by asking how many people in the hall had never heard the work.

"Almost half the audience raised their hands. Just once they heard the piece they went. Ah! because they recognised it. That's when the flag went up for me and I thought that maybe we were beginning to take audiences for granted, maybe they didn't have as much information as we thought they did."

Slatkin, like Simon Rattle, blames the decline of music education in state schools. When he was a child, his high school in Los Angeles boasted three choirs, two bands, an orchestra and a composer in residence. "Now the school is an armed camp and the whole thought of presenting Beethoven, Schubert or Mozart there is not even remotely conceivable."

Slatkin refuses to contemplate the suggestion that classical music is dead, although he does acknowledge that orchestral concerts face ever tougher competition. But how do you stop potential punters the incentive to choose the symphony concert over the dogpatch, a trip to the cinema, or a night in with a video?

Slatkin's answer would be a good start. He kicks off his concert, including the samba and bossa nova, Karel's Bolero, and Steve Reich's handclapping among the numerous illustrations. In subsequent pro-

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